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LETTERS FROM ITALY AND VIENNA.

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## LETTER I.

Vienna, Feb. 1851.

DEAR S—,

Though a straight line is the shortest between its extreme points, yet, if the extremities be Calais and Vienna, the shortest line that can be *generated* between them in time is a grand spiral, that fetches a far compass by Hanover, Berlin, and Breslaw,\* and comes wheeling up to the Danube with its train of huge and clattering caravans, smoking through every open window as vigorously as from its funnel. If fuel should fail by the way, the "Herr Conducteur" need only require of every German that he should throw his little bundle of cigars into the tender, and billets enough would be forthcoming for the full day's journey. With thirty-eight fellow-travellers in the same carriage, two of them

\* Already modified by the opening of the Prague line.

ladies, and thirty-five diligent fumists, we carried with us a condensation of smoke that made a rush at the first aperture, and waved through the frosty air in long blue streamers; and when all the sashes were let down upon nearing the final station, the whole train steamed from tender to truck like a steed relaxing to the goal.

It was not for the first time that I renewed acquaintance with the light-hearted and light-heeled Viennese. *Nous sommes legers, voilà tout!* was Madame de Stael's concession and defence in behalf of her fellow-citizens, and a hundred times I have made to myself the same apology (though in a somewhat different sense) for this happy race: whom it is impossible not to felicitate on their cheerful temperament, their frank and genial sociability, their natural courtesy and kindliness; nor, on the other hand, to take to task for their immoderate love of pleasure. Viennese existence may be defined, at least through the season, to be "life drawn out into a recurring series of dances." In other lands the dance is the bye-play of life, and subordinate to its more earnest purposes: but in a Viennese winter it is one of the prime

necessaries of being; it is better than meat and drink; and *sleep* every one would resign at the first touch of Strauss's fiddle. If that son of his father,—I know not how better to designate the man of hereditary minstrelsy,—could be set on the apex of St. Stephen's spire, and quaver forth his Orphean notes to the city that clustered at his feet and to the broad belt of suburbs beyond the encircling Glacis, I suppose that in every far and near chamber of the imperial metropolis every fair "locataire" would start upon her feet and dance *perforce* till he ceased.

Not having a turn for dancing—any more than Dr. South,\*—I was reduced, when nothing better was to be done, to button my English reserve about me, and to wait for the interludes of conversation. One unfailing resource was usually at hand. The votaries of Terpsichore and Thalia had been startled by a louder voice in 1848, and Politics yet contended

\* One can sympathise with this learned and austere Divine in his embarrassment at a Polish *réunion*. "In this exercise (of dancing) every body joined, and even I myself, *who have no manner of relish for such unedifying vagaries*, had a Madonna put into my hand by the Bishop of Plosko."

for the mastery with Pleasure. This had especially been the case in the winter of '49, when the very saloons of the Carnival had resounded with political discussions. I was congratulated by some non-Austrian Germans upon witnessing the improved and more earnest tone of conversation pervading the cafés since the revolution. Metternich's government had been too literally paternal; or, if you will—without meaning to impeach the great abilities of that autocratic statesman—maternal. He had treated the people as children, who were to do as they were bidden without asking questions, and then they should have *bonbons* in abundance. The two great instruments of Government were amusement and bugbears. If any unhappy citizen gave signs that he had outgrown the nursery, and was capable of thinking for himself, the next great political move was to draw a cordon round him; to deprive him of pens and ink, and by all means to prevent the infection of reason. "The people must be amused" was the bureaucratic cry. I am sorry to add, that some gentlemen whom I talked with, and who claimed intimate connexion with Metternich's friends, frankly professed the maxim, "The

people must be deceived!" They blamed both Metternich and Guizot for their mismanagement in not having yielded to the people in words and promised them every thing which they clamoured for. They would have had, they said, ample opportunities afterwards of gradually recovering all they had lost. The people however, at one burst, broke asunder all restraints, and eased themselves of their superiors. They acted as was to be expected;—the lewder sort like madmen, the better like schoolboys broke loose. They were slowly subdued and brought under the master's ferule; but they were no longer the children they had been before. Their talk was more serious, their aspirations more manly, their determination deep in the consciousness of growing strength. Development and progress would now seem inevitable, if they be not beguiled by the old bait of immoderate amusement. It is not force and martial law that can permanently replace the old state of things; but it will glide in easily and imperceptibly amid a heart-and-soul abandonment to frivolity. The difference is already striking between this year and last. Then there were many 'Herr Barons'

in earnest about the welfare of their country, who are now serious in nothing but in their admiration of the *ballet*. "It is delightful to hear no more politics," I have heard them say—and they go whirling round into oblivious felicity in cycles of never-ending waltzes.

The churches in Vienna are well attended both by men and women, and that much more frequently than in England. For you are not to suppose that the dance interferes with daily diligence in religious observances. It is true that it is not exactly incorporated with them, as in the Jewish and, perhaps, in all ancient religions; but, as you move sunwards from the northern snow, you would find it extremely difficult to still the saltatorial element of our nature by any stern theories of religion, which did not drive your disciples to vows and a nunnery. The transition from mass to the ball-room, and from the ball-room to mass, à la Louis XIV., alternates here as naturally as night and day. With the Carnival (extending this year to nearly three months), the festivities of the season ostensibly close: but the dancing propensities of the fair Wienerinnen are not to be put down by the regulations of the

Church. The substitution of Danubian trout for impenetrable beef, of *recherchés* dishes for plain *bouilli*, might be borne, (though I have heard the citizens complain that *fasting* is extravagantly dear), and at the close of the Carnival very many are ready for the confessional; but the dance survives. At no time in the year, I was told, were private, or perhaps I should say, secret balls so frequent as in Lent. And "why not?" my fair informant added, "since there are no public ones."

I should say that the feeling universally expressed during this Carnival is, that Vienna is itself again! as merry, as lighthearted, as saltatorial, as musical, and clean escaped from the seriousness of a revolution.

One word I must say, before quitting this place, with reference to the army. A finer set of men will not easily be met with. Their frank and just appreciation of the good qualities of opponents, their own self-possessed and unboastful bearing, their readiness under difficult circumstances to do their duty, and to make no parade of it when it is done, would do honour to any army. Cheerful in adverse chances, and ungasconading in triumph, and

avoiding in social intercourse all obtrusiveness of professional subjects, they are deservedly popular in society, and win the applause which they do not exact. I was in Vienna during the period of the Hungarian war, when they were losing battles, and when the descent of Görgey upon the Imperial City was within the range of apprehension. I had just crossed the Baden territory, then in a state of insurrection, and been for a few hours in the hands of the revolutionary rebels; where I had close opportunities of observing the dark scowling looks and restless ill-conditioned demeanour that betokened a bad cause. The appearance of almost every one was at once suspicious, ferocious, conscience-smitten, and desperate. But when I found myself among the Austrian soldiery, it was like the transition from a November fog to the sunshine of summer. Every man's countenance was open and honest, and beamed with the consciousness of doing his duty. They were not out of heart; they were prepared for a long struggle, and quietly confident of ultimate success. These sentiments I heard expressed at a time when, if there were any truth in newspaper reports,



they were meeting with numerous disasters. It was pleasant to remark with what respect they spoke of the bravery of the Hungarians, and with what cordiality they admired the military genius of Görgey. That remarkable man, as he won the confidence of his fellow-countrymen beyond all other leaders, commanded in like preeminence the respect and admiration of his opponents. At one period, when there was some expectation of capturing him, a saying of General Wohlgemuth's was in every one's mouth—that if he were taken prisoner they would have a difficult question to decide, whether to hang him, or to make him a Field Marshal. But the Fates decreed otherwise, Διος δ' ἐτελείετο βουλή. Perhaps in his philosophic retirement in Steiermark, amid the crucibles of his laboratory, he may regret that he ever left the quiet paths of science for a brief and brilliant career of heroism, that went out in darkness: perhaps he may have opened upon the page which he had turned down, when the voice of his country summoned him away, with the self-congratulation that is bitter as reproach—

“Woe, woe, for *Ungarn*, not at all for me!”

A year later I revisited the Austrian soldiery, when they were wounded and humbled by the aid of Russia. For however this event may be regarded in the distance, it was impossible to hold intercourse with the ober-lieutenants and subaltern officers, without perceiving, in spite of their reserve, how deeply they felt this humiliation. It was similar to that which would have been felt by British troops, if 50,000 French had assisted them in putting down the rebellion in Ireland. It certainly balanced for the time any exultation at the successful result. It was as little advisable to speak to an Austrian soldier of the Russian army, as of the field of Waterloo to a Frenchman.

But when Hungary and Lombardy were under foot, the attention of the people was turned to the affairs of Germany. The national mind soon recovered its elasticity, as Austria assumed a proud position among the inferior states. Diplomacy and a gigantic display of force gradually trod back her northern rival from all her encroachments, and left to her barely her own boundaries. When I was in Hamburgh in the summer of '50, and saw the

town garrisoned by Prussian troops, and found Prussian influence paramount, and heard the citizens speak of Prussia as a flock of doves would speak of the condor that was garrisoning the dovecot, it seemed inconceivable that, within a few months, the two-headed eagle of Austria should have cowed its black rival in this far northern nook; that the dark-blue uniforms should have marched out to make room for the imperial white. But so it is; and at present, from Holstein almost to the gates of Rome, the great breadth of Europe is brooded over by the wings of Austria. How long there may remain any neutral ground between the intruders in Tuscany and Rome, depends I suppose upon moves in Paris. "We have been within sight of the French," said some officers to me, who were returning from Florence, in the tone and manner of those who meant to say, "we wish the time were come to grapple with them." The ill feeling that has been aroused against England by the real or imaginary intrigues of our Foreign Office in Hungary and Italy, and the exasperation arising from General Haynau's unfortunate affair, are so strong that I cannot doubt but that, if it were the English

who had occupied Rome instead of the French, long before now the Austrian would have been at the gates.

A lion that has tasted blood, and an army fresh from battle, are in the same mood of pugnacity. Both are eager for a new fray. After the excitements of a real campaign, peace is tame and stupid. The *esprit de corps* is quickened by keen emulation, the fever-thirst of honour is high, and the fierce delights of danger blend with ambitious dreams of "orders" and promotion in making an army of 600,000 men ready to accept battle with any one, or to give it for any cause. They were quite in earnest in braving Prussia, and prepared to march rapidly upon Berlin, if she had not retreated. They (I speak of the soldiers) would be glad to find an English army in any quarter of the Continent, to whom they might shew their opinion of our policy and of the insult which was poured upon their General; and how long they may be kept from the French depends upon cooler judgments than predominate among the 600,000.

I give you the impressions which have arisen from conversing a hundred times with officers

in the cafés and other public places. But the civilians and especially the politicians have other notions.

This fine but dangerous tone of the army, regarded merely as a body of fighting men, is due perhaps in good measure to their young Emperor, to whom they are enthusiastically devoted. No one who considers his position can find cause of blame in the prudence which leads him to attach the army to his person. Civilians indeed complain that the army is alone an object of imperial solicitude; that he is less the Emperor of his people, than the Commander-in-chief of the troops. But when he ascended the throne, with two insurrections closing in upon him, he had nothing but his naked sword to lean upon; and he more than any man must know how to appreciate the faithfulness of his army. But it is supposed to be more than a sense of prudence that attaches him to the white uniform. His own tastes are said to be military: he has qualifications that *take* with soldiers: he throws himself into military duties *con amore*: he is a father to his army and its master: he sees things done himself: if troops come in by the rail, he goes

down to the station to receive them; if they leave, he dismisses them in person: the wounded and sick he visits frequently in the hospitals; and some fine morning, when no one expects it, he rides out upon the Glacis and gives sudden orders to assemble 10,000 men around him instantly, that he may see with what efficiency and expedition they can support him in case of need. These things make him respected by the ranks and loved, and if he have not high military talents (of which I know nothing), he has at least the heart of a soldier, and is the sort of Emperor whom soldiers delight to serve. I have often heard subaltern officers express their attachment to him in strong terms, and speak of performing little works of supererogation out of "their love to the Kaiser."

These, and any other notices of national feeling which I may send you, are drawn from intercourse with the natives in their own homes, or in their places of public resort. The fashionable hotels afford no opportunities of becoming acquainted with the citizens, as they are naturally frequented by strangers and travellers, not by the natives. An Englishman may spend

his month in such places, and meet with many Germans, without meeting with one Viennese. In general, I have avoided the resorts of the fashionable, and sought intercourse with the people and the *bourgeoisie*. Among the middle-class thousands, the native sentiments stand in bold relief, while the aristocratic tens and hundreds are nearly alike in all civilized countries, and too cosmopolitan to be national.

## LETTER II.

Venice, Padua, Bologna.

DEAR S—,

In looking over the broad map of Europe, marked deeply with its black arteries of iron, do not be beguiled by the delusion that railroads annihilate time and space. No hours are so tedious as those that are spent upon the rail. The old roomy diligence with its alternations of hill-side and valley, its grotesque and amusing array of quadrupeds jingling their bells merrily as in perpetual announcement "the Campbells are coming," its frequent invitations to travellers to take a walk ahead, while the cattle were mastering a small gradient; its twenty minutes of procrastination at every poste, to allow you to see the village and gossip with the villagers; its three quarters of an hour, extended to an hour and a quarter, to enable you to do justice to the rustic *table*



*d'hote*, which usually produced something worth observing, even if the bread and *braten* were too hard for mastication; in short, with its general claim with all its bipeds and quadrupeds to be an integral portion of the social system of the country, tested perhaps, but amply rewarded, your powers of patient endurance. The railroad gives you nothing but time. After traversing broad Europe by steam, you know little more of its scenery than if you had passed under it through a tunnel, and no more of its inhabitants than if you had passed over it in a balloon. Express trains will not increase your stock of ideas. One idea is predominant and absolute throughout the day; and that is, the distance from the final terminus. From the moment you receive your ticket you suffer a syncope in your existence, till you return it to the official collector. You have nothing to do, nothing to think about, nothing to observe, nothing to learn, till you set foot again upon *terra firma*. Such, at least, was my feeling when I spent two-and-twenty hours in the continuous resignation of despair, ruminating one indigestible problem, "when shall I be at my journey's end." The

old high way, threading villages and vales, and climbing the hills, and running by cottage doors and groups of playing children, and enlivened by a busy population, would have relieved the hours with entertainment, and have given some play to one's human sympathies: but these prison-like vans, that keep the same dead level to the end, save, indeed, invaluable time, but leave you nothing to look at more interesting than your watch.

I must make one exception however (for a few are to be made) for the line from Vienna to Laibach. It has the peculiarity of being sinuous and slow. From Murzuschlag onwards it is nearly as tortuous among the hills as the river Mur. Twelve miles an hour was the top of our speed. But we were richly compensated, while it was daylight, by the splendid hill-scenery of Styria, through which the line insinuates itself to Gratz.

It is worth while spending a day at this place, if it were only to mount the height from which the fortress commands the city, and constrains it to unconditional submission. It rises as a conical mound at the edge of the town, and yields you from its summit one of

those panoramic landscapes which persuade you at the moment that they are the most lovely, the most beautiful, the most enchanting of all that you have seen: till you pass on your way to find, that Nature is prodigal of beauty, and permits none of her children to say, "I have seen all her glory!" The Mur wanders leisurely through the city and across the plain, and gentle undulations float up from the level, till they crest into distinct hills with great variety of slope and configuration. Chateaux, farmhouses, cottages, and village churches, all dazzling white, are scattered prodigally over the whole scene,—now sheltered in the dells and hollows, and now standing proudly on the eminence to look out on the beauty around them. They are strewn so profusely from the higher declivities down to the gates of the city, that it is dubious which are the proper satellites of Gratz, and which are concentric upon their own village church. Far off, on a height by itself, rise the two conspicuous towers of Maria Trost, glistening, in white relief, against a background of dark firs and above a foreground of deep-tinted verdure: whence, beneath a range of sterner mountains that close in the amphitheatre, she

invites pilgrims from city and village, and from all the neighbouring hills, to pay devotions at her favoured shrine.

In approaching Trieste from Laibach, a journey to be performed by the *Malle Poste*, I was interested in observing the change of feature and character now perceptible in the mixed race, that melts into the German on one side and the Slavonian on the other. The highway also was full of life. Roads which stagger up mountain heights, where you would look for desolation and solitude, are carefully macadamized to bear the crowd of carriages that import the produce of the world into Austria from the Adriatic, or carry the produce of Austria to be shipped at Trieste for exportation. When from some mountain ridge we obtained a view behind us of the ribbon-like road, that folded beneath itself in zigzags to the valley, we beheld a long cavalcade of carts and wagons slowly defiling up the pass. Nor were foot passengers infrequent. The peasants were going to their work of clearing the snow from the elevated roads, clad in very primitive garments of skin with the wool, or fur, turned inwards; and their

wives and daughters, holding their drapery above the snow, stalked majestically along in high Wellington boots.

The first grand view of the Adriatic from the rocky heights above Trieste makes the heart leap with delight. It lies before you, unless the Sirocco is blowing, fair as a lake, and lapping into the hollows on either side of the town, where innumerable vessels crowd close to the tongue of land that dips into the bay. The city sleeps far beneath you, as it were at the bottom of an immense amphitheatre of rock, on whose highest parapet you are standing. It will lead you over four English miles to follow the spiral road that lies grooved round the concave till it issues in the port below.

The Boreas came down from the hills so boisterously upon Trieste, sweeping up every street, clattering at every crazy door, and staggering the pedestrian at every corner, that I should have had some misgivings of hydrophobian nervousness as to the propriety of committing my "frail bark" to the Adriatic in so tempestuous a gale, had I not learned, that this blustering Boreas was preeminently pro-

pitious to my purpose. He howls over the mountains, but leaves the water scarcely ruffled at their feet. It is only the Sirocco which rouses the Adriatic to dangerous wrath.

Accordingly we steamed off for Venice in a local hurricane: but once fairly out at sea, it began to relax; then whistled for a while *diminuendo*, till it whistled itself out into silence. The mountains that lay in a semicircle to our right, round the head of the Adriatic, glistened snow-capped in the sun, and ere long we were running a parallel with the enormous sand-bank that stretches for more than eighty miles its protecting breakwater to the sea. It conceals the mainland from view, and bears a few habitations on its surface. But soon the Campanile of St. Mark rose up, like a lighthouse, behind it; and after steering through the narrow channel that admits a passage to the inner shallows, we found ourselves already at the majestic entrance of the City of Waters, in presence of her domes, and towers, and palaces, and churches, reflected clearly on the unrippled surface of the lagoon. There is no land before you, no cliff or beach: but, to the eye, bright clusters of palaces stand moored

out upon the water; from whose windows the maiden can look smiling down into the floating mirror beneath her. The Dogana, the Church of St. George, and that of Maria di Salute form a conspicuous foreground at the junction of the Canale Grande with the della Giudecca. We were already in front of the Doge's Palace, to the right, and looked down upon, from its high column, by the winged Lion of St. Mark, when the spell of admiration was broken by official annoyance.

The minor tribulations of foreign travel are as bracing to one's patriotism as deeper trials to our moral nature. Before we were allowed to touch shore, three or four officers came on board, speaking nothing but Venetian, and intent upon taking fees over our luggage. I observed that my fellow-travellers were duly armed with *zwanzigers* for the occasion; but as I happened to possess nothing but Austrian paper,—which is any thing but a *douceur* to an Italian,—their concentrated virtue exploded upon me. My unfortunate portmanteau was put to the question, to see what confession it would make of heretical and revolutionary publications. My Murrays, and Dialogue Books,

and Guides to Picture Galleries, were all declared to be suspicious. They hesitated for a while over Bradshaw; turned it gravely this way and that, and opened it in diverse places; but at last decided that it was an ill-looking book, and might possibly contain the statistics of the Inquisition. Even my private account-book was seized, because it had a printed almanac at the beginning. In short, every scrap of printed paper was confiscated to avenge the indignant virtue of unbribed officials. On the morrow I spent some hours, and sundry zwan-zigers, in recovering my property from the Dogana, and getting it through the censor's office. But at last the sleek censor, smiling at me from head to foot, as an experienced man smiles at a dupe, put me in possession of Bradshaw and the rest, with the satisfactory assurance, that they contained nothing contrary to the faith.

The external beauty and interest of Venice lie in the prospects from the lagoons and Canale Grande, and in the Piazza San Marco and its immediate vicinity. From the top of the Campanile you have a bird's-eye view of the palace-crowded island with its attendant satellites,—the



broad Adriatic to the east, the range of inland Alps to the west, and a single line of rail, straight as a rod, attaching Venice across the lagoon like a pendulum to the mainland. As soon as you leave the Grand Canal, that writhes like a snake through the heart of the city, reflecting its princely palaces in picturesque variety, you have the choice of two modes of progression: you may thread, in a black gondola, a network of narrow and dingy channels, between lofty mansions, whose walls are always dank and mould-spotted, and under innumerable bridges that join house to house and gangway to gangway; or you may plunge on foot into an entanglement of labyrinthine allies, just wide enough for a tall man to stretch his arms in; which have never felt the sun, nor seen more than a narrow riband of blue sky overhead. You lose your way inevitably; and, after making as many turns as a statesman in distress, emerge unexpectedly upon a small open plot called a *Campo*, and then plunge again into the thick of the city, and take your chance of turning up somewhere. The streets *proper* are all aqueous, and the gondola is at once the carriage, cab, omnibus, and cart. An

old family coach would be as unwieldy here as an elephant; and the coachman might ferry it all round the inner city without finding a street large enough to get in at.

The Palais Royal, or whatever its name is, at Paris will give you some idea of the bustle and promenading of the Piazza San Marco, surrounded in like manner with shops and cafés,—but *none* of its mosaic pavement, its air of Eastern splendour, and the five domes and minarets of its rich and elegant Basilica. The impression which it produces can hardly be exaggerated: its associations of power, of pomp, of pleasure, of decay; its triumphs and disasters, its glories and its villanies, mingle in strange confusion in the memory, and find, each, some memorial in its present condition. The pillars of the Doge's Palace are sunk knee-deep in the sand, and inch by inch *sinking*: nor is there much in Venice that seems to hold connexion with the present and the future. It is not in full progress like Trieste, and it is doubtful if even the railroad will put young blood into its old veins. It lives upon the glory of the past; like a race worn out in personal qualifications, that is proud of the palaces of its ancestors.

The railroad that leads from Venice to dull Padua, after striking across the lagoon to the mainland, is received by a plain as level as the Adriatic, closely set with pollards festooned with vines. At this bleak season of the year they stretch out their bare withered arms to each other across the whole country, and look as if the giants of old time had been suddenly arrested as they were leading a vintage-dance to Pan, and their dry skeletons remain, still clasping each other's hand. A day is well spent in Padua in seeing at least its three great sights. I do not speak of the tomb of its founder, the venerable ANTENOR; nor of the bones of LIVY, who offended Pollio by that which has made him dear to the Paduans, his patriotic *Patavinity*: but the *trio* of sights to which I refer, are Giotto's frescoed Chapel, the Church of Saint Antonio, and the Sala or Hall of Justice. One is hurried through these places by impatient guides and the jingling of vergers' keys: and, sooth to say, the pictures so hastily formed in the mind by sweeping a rapid glance over walls of imagery, become speedily confused, and leave only the recollection of the enjoyment without the power of

distinctly recalling that which occasioned it. But there is one Virgin and Child of Giotto's which I cannot forget. It stands just behind the altar almost level to the horizontal view. The two faces are somewhat nestling together, cheek to cheek, and the Virgin bears that calm expression of unearthly loveliness that looks into one's soul.

At Ferrara, where I staid but a few hours, I felt little more interest in Tasso's prison than in Antenor's tomb: I could not believe in its identity. I could feel no sympathy with the sorrows of the Poet in a dungeon of brigands, in which he, perhaps, never set foot, and where almost certainly he was not confined. Faith is essential to enthusiasm: and when the Paduans really believed that they had discovered the gigantic bones of Antenor and the symmetrical skeleton of Titus Livius, we can well understand and forgive the reverential feeling that led them to admit *into the church* the relics of these heathen worthies, as a sort of pagan saints, canonized by fame. But it requires a strong belief to stimulate men to these indiscretions; and as long as a lurking scepticism remains, the mind cannot lend itself to wonder and emotion.

One is not always in the mood for pictures any more than for poetry. A certain leisure and detachment from material influences is necessary to leave one to those fuller sentiments which swell up continuously and never *per saltum*. Hence it is that I often find greater enjoyment in churches, which, being constantly at hand, can be entered when the soul is in harmony with the higher objects of art, than in those famous galleries which are visited in the whirl and materialism of sight-seeing. One of the greatest enjoyments of Italy is to wander about alone from church to church without guide or guide-book, and see with your own eyes, and feel for yourself, and drink delight where you spontaneously find it.

At Bologna, and indeed everywhere in Italy, the passport system is most rigid. Through the whole of this tour, compared with former ones, taken since the revolution, I have observed the diminished deference that is paid to my fellow-countrymen. Formerly they were supposed to be a sort of privileged persons, who travelled only for their amusement or information, and never mixed themselves up with parties and politics: but now, as far as my

experience goes, they fare no better than restless Poles and revolutionary Frenchmen. I have met certainly with no favour, and at times with bare civility: and I have had occasion to observe the difference that is made between the English and the Americans, to the advantage of the latter. At one police-office, upon presenting my passport, I was questioned in a somewhat repulsive and imperious tone as to my birthplace, object of travelling, &c.; but when my companion, an American, produced his papers, the countenance of the official immediately brightened up, and he replied, "Ah, Monsieur is an American! the *Americans* are a *good* sort of people." This change is due, I believe, to several causes: to the supposed intrigues of Lord Palmerston in Italian affairs; to the treatment which General Haynau received in England, and which, wherever the Austrians have influence, is most deeply resented; and to the British passports which were given at Rome to democratic Italians, in order to favour their escape. The latter was, doubtless, a merciful device: but now every English traveller is paying for it. His papers are not

taken as a proof of his nationality. He must present himself personally before the police, and not send a valet-de-place as formerly. I have heard Austrians bitterly contrast the protection and more than ordinary deference that was paid to Englishmen with the unredressed insult that was heaped upon their General in England. It is difficult to make them understand that with us the government has no power of arbitrary vengeance, but can only put things in course of ordinary law.

BOLOGNA lies at the bottom of the remotest undulations thrown off from the Apennines, where they subside and die out into the plain. From the top of the adjacent hill, at the decline of day, you can hardly persuade yourself, at the first glance, that it is not the broad ocean which is spread out in the distance. The plain is so boundless, so hazy, so blue, so dotted over with white buildings, that look like the crest of waves in the twilight of evening! The ugly towers of the city do not invite the eye to rest on them, though they crown some of the most beautiful, or more properly, beautified churches that Italy can boast. Francia, Guido,

the Caraccis, Dominichino, have made them famous.

I descended the hill and passed through the colonnades of the streets (for in Bologna the principal streets are built on colonnades), now dropping in at this church-door and now at that, to see what was renowned in art or observable in the worshippers. It was now Lent; all the churches were well filled: in several, the holy sacrament was being administered to the laity, and the confessional boxes were most of them occupied. In the latter, however, I observed only one *man*, with a very lazzaroni appearance, and who, I thought, had, probably, escaped from Passatore's gang to get absolution for his spring robberies before opening the season for the summer. The rest of the boxes were occupied by the feebler and less criminal sex.

There is in all the worship of the Roman Catholics a great mixture of reverence and irreverence. The bowings and kneelings and osculations were numerous; and I could not help looking at one little six-year-old child as if I loved him, who, with a sweet innocent gravity, left his mother's hand as she walked



down the church, and dropped behind for a moment, to give a hearty *smack* to every holy thing which he passed. On the other hand many made long parentheses in their prayers to retail the news to their neighbours, or to beg for charity of the stranger. One old woman, nearest the altar and just in presence of the priest, was plying her distaff and reciting her prayers simultaneously. Dogs you might suppose to be sacred animals from the number that frequent the churches; and the baskets of vegetables that stand on the floor would furnish forth a small market. It must also be confessed that the great majority of worshippers appeared to be repeating, mechanically, a series of words with the smallest possible attention or semblance of devotion.

The personal appearance of the men and women in this part of Italy is prepossessing. There are boys and girls in abundance (though often in rags) who would be considered handsome specimens of their species anywhere. Both here and at Padua the young children are very pretty. The piazzas are sprinkled with little rosy-cheeked *brunettes*, and black-eyed ragamuffins apparently ripe for any boy-

ish mischief. They look up into your face with that easy nonchalance and lively impertinence, which makes it dubious whether you ought, as a moral disciplinarian, to chuckle them under the chin or to box their ears.

## LETTER III.

Florence, March 1851.

DEAR S—,

Four horses and four oxen dragged us up the passes of the nude Apennines, which present, in many places, the wild beauty or desolation. Vegetation is scanty, and the "human face divine" so rarely to be met with, that we were left very much to enjoy, undisturbed, our own meditations along the range of raggedly clad rocks. A miserable "Restoration" by the wayside presumptuously offered us a dinner and made an enlivening change. Two presumable sorceresses, who had occupied the cabin for many years, kindled a fire, and swung over it a mighty cauldron of macaroni soup; but, whether from natural causes or from malignant conjuration, not a particle of smoke would ascend the chimney: on the contrary it made straight for the door,

which was on the opposite side of the dinner-table, shrouding on its way the fair ladies, our fellow-travellers, who showed a little vexation and humour at being thus compelled, unseasonably, to wear the veil. When we had discussed the macaroni broth, our appetites, though still keen, were baffled by the pertinacity of the *beef*—to speak of it with courtesy—for some of us had strange suspicions, and eyed the two gaunt cauldron-women with horror. We tried it with our knives and with our teeth, but so unsuccessfully, that at last we were reduced to look at it with hungry eyes, and wish it were made of “penetrable stuff.” The only trait of character that presented itself—and that not peculiar to Italy—was afforded by our coachman, who kept up a lively parley with the postillion, half in earnest half in jest, touching a matrimonial alliance to be arranged between their respective families. “Well,” he concluded at last, “if you like, I will take your sister to wife: but, you understand, I will be master at home, if not—

(O fortunatæ nimium sua si bona nôrint  
Angliacæ!)

—I give the stick to everybody.”

If Venice is a splendid spectacle, Florence is the city to live and luxuriate in. Its marble cathedral with its enormous dome (the predecessor and rival of St. Peter's), its rich and tasteful campanile; its churches, each a treasury of sacred art; its statues and monuments; its busy streets, where the throng are moving to and fro for ever; its pleasant *Arno*, fretting against its four bridges; the inestimable riches of genius in the Uffizii and the Pitti Palace, combine with its pleasant position among the hills to make it one of the most charming cities in the world in which to sojourn for a season.

On our way hither we had often been alarmed by reports of the bandit Il Passatore and his corps. I am told that a few weeks ago not a single carriage passed these hills from Bologna without being stopped and plundered. But the grey coats of the Austrians were now visible on the heights, forty of the banditti were already in prison, and the rest, as we believe, have decamped. The Austrians are now in possession of Tuscany: and, for my part, considering that I was indebted to them for a safe journey, I greeted their ap-

pearance with pleasure. A great portion of the people have already opened their eyes to the evils of violent revolutions. Nothing has more reconciled them to the idea of having some one to rule over them who *can* rule, than the exploits of the redoubted Passatore. The specimen they have had of the want of a strong executive has convinced them that they must choose between the rule of constituted authorities and the rule of brigands. A state that cannot keep its own subjects in order cannot protect them. As soldiers are removed banditti take their place; just as, if the maritime powers were to dismantle their fleets, the sea would be covered with pirates. And thus it happens that men who would have hated the sight of the Austrians a few months ago, are now glad to find that some power is at hand to protect them from the plunder of anarchy. The common instincts of self-preservation will lead men to sacrifice liberty, as they always have done, to personal security.

The begging propensities of the Italians are distressing. That striking parable of the Unjust Steward would, I am persuaded, lose to

their minds one great trait of its naturalness from their inability to enter into the Steward's dejection—"to beg I am ashamed!" I was accosted just now, as I strolled out of the city to the Poggia, by a man wrapped in a fine blue cloak and smoking a cigar, which he took from his mouth to inform me that he was the father of four small children, and hoped that I would give him a *grazia*. A little farther on, having taken some notice of a well-dressed child that was gathering wild flowers, the *bonne* immediately presented herself to me, and begged for a few *quatrini*. It is dangerous to *look* at any one, however well he may be dressed; for the chances are that he will take the opportunity of soliciting charity. It would seem that a vast number of well-dressed people are beggars in disguise.

In the Uffizii Palace, the room called the Tribune is the centre of interest, unless it be divided with the group of Niobe. Michael Angelo, Raphael, Guido, Titian, Annibal Carracci, Albert Dürer, Correggio, Paul Veronese, and others, form a splendid circle round the five statues in the centre, which are all haloed with fame. I was particularly struck by that

of the man crouching down and whetting his knife mechanically, while his whole soul looks out to some object before him. Neither this nor the Venus de Medici lose anything by being set in juxtaposition. It is marvellous reality in the presence of mythological beauty.

The high Gardens of Boboli, to which the Pitti Palace belongs, present as lovely a scene as one could desire. From the semicircular terrace above, surrounded by a belt of deep verdure, the grounds descend rapidly by artificial slopes to the Palace below, nursing midway a diminutive lake, with its grotto in the centre, presided over by the water-god, and inhabited by Tritons and Naiads, that beckon to each other in marble. Urns, and vases, and statues, and fountains are distributed about the gardens, which are laid out designedly as a paradise of art. The eye rests for a moment on the magnificent pile of building below, then sweeps over the wide valley beyond Florence whitened with innumerable habitations, as if a mighty city had been broadcast over the plain. Just opposite, across the town, rise the bold bare mountains, not as they lie more distantly to



the left in continuous ridges, but in grand distinct masses, that billow up against each other. A chasm divides them at one point (through which lies the road to Bologna) from the more verdant eminence to the right crowned with the towers of Fiesole. So many princes and nobles have been won by the beauty of its site, that they have crowded it with mansions and villas. It rises on the view among the neighbouring heights as a mountain of palaces. On descending the gardens you have a near panorama of the city, with the lordly proportions of its cathedral and the rich architecture of Giotto's Campanile.

In time of full service the gigantic cathedral presents a sight of high interest. Five congregations at least are accommodated within it, and kept in simultaneous operation. On the pavement, just underneath the wide dome, an octagonal parapet, corresponding to its base, encloses the high altar with its officiating priests and a goodly number of worshippers. Other congregations are gathered up the recesses before their respective altars, and in the body of the church a larger multitude cluster round the pulpit, beneath an immense awn-

ing, hung low, and expanded over the whole width of the nave. From the north transept pour forth the voices of a full quire, and invite another assembly, without seeming to interfere with the devotions of the rest. The broad pavement between these five parties is dotted over with worshippers kneeling in all directions, as they feel more strongly the attraction of this or that altar. Others vary their position from time to time, either not knowing what saint to choose, or desirous of securing the favour of more than one.

To me the northern transept was the more attractive. In front of the altar a space capable of containing from two to three hundred people was fenced off from the rest of the church by an oblong partition, half wainscot, half glass. A shallow flat roof projects inward round the partition, and, supported by slight pillars, forms a sort of piazza, under which the choristers are congregated. In the midst stands a large rolling lectern, bearing breviaries of gigantic type that can be read at a great distance. The choristers present a motley appearance from their variegated dresses: some of them heads black, shoulders

crimson, body white, and extremities black again. They smile and make signs to each other, and gossip from time to time, till their turn comes to take part in the service; when they "start into voice a moment, and are still." Meanwhile two youths in white stand at the elevated lectern, the corners of which they just reach with extended hand. The music is stentorian. Now a pair of crimson capes, one from each side, advance to the lectern, and bow, and utter a musical note, and separate to their places again, and are succeeded by another pair. Anon the bell rings, and there is a solemn commotion: all heads are bowed: the candles are raised aloft on their golden candlesticks: the censer of incense swings more vigorously: the lectern wheels round upon the pivot, and a new act commences.

Accustomed in England to much preaching and much intelligible reading of the Scriptures, for few persons *intone* the Bible, we are most struck in the Roman Catholic worship with the seemingly small amount of instruction and exhortation. Preaching, in comparison with prayer, is always at a dis-

count. I went into one church in which the pulpit was occupied by an orator, who was attended to by the occupants of perhaps a dozen benches before him, while the more numerous portion of the congregation were plying their prayer-books apart, indifferent to his address. They now and then listened to him for a few sentences, then returned to their breviaries, and their lips were in rapid motion again. Considering that the Bible is about as frequently seen and read in Italy as a volume of Acts of Parliament in England, we are led to inquire how the people obtain any sufficient knowledge of the most simple facts of the Gospel, and of biblical history in general. Line upon line and precept upon precept, with a very ample reading of the Scriptures from week to week, leave our rural population with a very small amount of scriptural knowledge. The same thing has to be repeated over and over again like the perpetual dripping of water, till a small portion slowly stalactites in the memory. How is this process carried on in Roman Catholic countries, where nearly the whole of the public services seem to consist in the recitation of

prayers? Perhaps the proper answer is, that no such work is attempted: that the people are as ignorant of the general contents of the Bible as might be anticipated. The priests, however, take much pains with the children, and the confessional gives them a hold upon the mothers, which, in fact, brings all early education under their control. The English character will not bear the interference in the household, which is assumed by the foreign confessor. An Englishman, of devout habits, feels instinctively that he is the natural priest of his own family,—a position in which he seems to be justified by St. Paul, who does not direct uninstructed wives to a *mental* divorce from their husbands, that they may be united in spirit to a priest, but, “if they will learn anything,” he says, “let them ask *their own husbands at home*.” The confessional puts the devout wife wholly in the power of the priest, till, as she ripens in religious feeling, nothing is left to her husband but the body; her soul is married to another.

On Wednesday I was present at a Lent sermon, tolerably well attended, under the usual pic-nic-like awning in the nave of Santa

Croce. The good man was highly oratorical. He seemed to be contending against the Powers of the air, less with argument and spiritual weapons, than with clenched fist and open palm, and the windmill-whirling of his arms. With our northern snow-cooled blood, and more purely intellectual, as distinguished from æsthetic, cultivation, we are indifferent judges of what is suited to a meridional people. I cannot, however, help thinking that the example of the great Master himself, in the midst of an imaginative race under a warm meridian, is on the side of the calm and serious mode of instruction, and not on that of the declamatory and rhapsodical. Who could vociferate the Parables, or deliver the Sermon on the Mount, with vehement gesticulation? The effect of mere oratory is as evanescent as the froth of the sea. If immediate action indeed be required, it may be highly successful: but if it relates to those moral subjects which are permanently to influence our conduct, its effect is nearly *null*. The popular declaimer sees his audience before him in a great calm, and he lets loose the storm of words, and lashes up their feelings, and

puts them in a chafing agitation; but when his voice ceases, it is like the falling of the wind; the billows subside, the froth disappears, and their feelings flow back into their wonted channels, as if nothing had happened. One word of real instruction, one wholesome truth insinuated and fixed in their minds, which they may carry home and reflect upon in private, would have more influence upon their conduct and upon their permanent tone of mind, than any amount of pleasurable excitement dependent upon the contagion of numbers and the thrilling power of sound.

As I looked into another church on my way home, I read the following inscription:

“Whoever thou art that drawest near in supplication, bow down upon thy face; venerate the threshold; imprint kisses upon the walls; and prostrately adore Saint Antoninus the grace and defence of Florence.”

On a slab opposite is another plagiarism from Horace—

“Nil desperandum Antonino duce.”

When they call upon us to worship many gods (and Horace never went farther than this in his worship of idols), it is but fair that they should be allowed to adopt the language

of the heathen. Otherwise, with all admiration of the elegant fancy and exquisite tact of the cultured Lyrist, I feel great repugnance at finding him replacing apostles and prophets as the exponent of Christian aspirations. I have seen a consecrated cemetery on Italian ground with a motto over its portal, that betokened nothing to my mind but spiritual inanity. Instead of some noble sentence from the Bible, pointing to a resurrection, and to *their* blessedness who die in the Lord, your expectation was mocked by the melodious platitude—

OMNES EODEM COGIMUR !



## LETTER V.

Florence, March 1851.

DEAR S—,

It is beneath the dignity of history and, I fear, of epistolography (as my subject descends I draw upon the Johnsonian vocabulary), to give you a bill-of-fare. Cowper, with his manly unprudish vernacular, could venture safely and gracefully upon a dung-hill;\* and all that *I* have to deal with is the most refined dinner that was ever served up at the table-d' hôte of the Hotel—at Florence. It consists of six courses, produced on a feast day, a Sunday: and as we take nothing but a cup of coffee and a dry roll for breakfast, you may suppose that when the bell rings between five and six, travellers' appetites are in the ascendant. But then there are six courses coming, which might satisfy Vitellius! Alas,

\* "The stable yields," &c.—*Task*.

they keep the promise to the ear and break it to the hope.

First course—half a round of Bologna sausage as thin as a visiting-card.

Second course—a patty as large as half-a-crown, containing a quarter of an ounce, I believe, of cocks' gills.

Third course—a slicelette of mutton that would balance a penny.

Fourth course—a little spinage.

Fifth course—a whole lark.

Sixth course—a syllabub pudding, all froth.

Dilution of wine *ad libitum*.

This is an elegant repast; and I do not envy the man who cannot eat it.

But to leave gastrology, let us turn to something more elevating.

On the top of one of the many mountains that close in upon Florence stands the little town of Fiesole, famed for old age and beauty. It remains where it was before the ages of history, when the Etruscans laid stone upon stone, as they lie now. But what scenes have passed beneath it in the deep valley of the Arno, since the day when it defied Rome in her infancy to the day when it defied her again

in her decrepitude ! It has seen the greatest empire in the world grow to maturity and wither away beneath it. It gave shelter to Cataline, and has survived consuls and emperors. It has seen the Arno roll in blood at its feet, and watched in the distance the plundering tribes of the north as they hastened to the destruction or the defence of Rome. The Goth, the Lombard, the Frank, have spread desolation around it : but its handful of inhabitants have kept their high nest in the rock. The wars of mediæval times have seen it towering above them, till in securer days the Medici came to dwell in its shadow, and the gardens of princely houses were spread on its declivities. It looks out now upon the splendid palaces of the nobles of Italy ; upon Florence clustering on both banks of the river around its solemn and prodigious dome ; upon monuments of art which are the wonder of the world : but it is prouder of its rude wall of Etruscan masonry, than of all the glories of the surrounding scene. It has changed Fæsulæ to Fiesole, and that is all. It claims the respect of patriarchal age, and belongs to an earlier generation than the cities of the land.

Man is so like to man in all similar conditions that I could fancy, as I slowly descended the mountain, that if I had visited the ancient Fæsulans in their Etruscan days, I should scarcely have found them differing from their present representatives. The same misery or love of gain (if cash was then coined) would have surrounded me with beggars, as now: some lame boy of the old world would have hopped before me, perhaps, as eager to show me the workmanship of the new-built wall as my present guide was to show me its decay: the lads would have ceased from their game on the green to stare curiously at the stranger, as now: the half-coquetish maiden's then maiden progenitrix would have smiled at me from the door-sill, like her many-removed granddaughter: some three young girls, hanging together in hoyden bashfulness, would soon have grown bold and asked me for coppers, as now:—and yet these people have been dust these two or three thousand years, and know nothing that has taken place around them; not even, that in heart and soul, in all their thoughts and feelings and passions, they have been perpetually reproduced in their

descendants; and that if they should start to life again from their dank beds in the shadow of the ancient wall, they would wake as from a long sleep to know old Fæsulæ again, and to claim its present inhabitants for their brothers and uncles and cousins! And when in a little while they all rise together to the Judgment, despite the lapse of ages, how *like*,—in two great divisions,—will every man's story be to every man's!

Two minds of high genius that filled the world with imagery without chisel or brush, are for ever associated with Florence. The house in which DANTE was born is still shown in the city, and the palace garden that BOC-CACCIO has immortalized lies on the slopes of Fiesole. The former poet, so prodigal of invention, and filling a liquid language with strength till it swelled sonorous as a silver trumpet, vindicates his place in the foremost rank of bards, and wears his myrtle with Homer and Milton. Among his countrymen he stands alone, with no second near him. His influence has been felt for ages in the world of imagination, and poesy, sculpture, and painting have kindled their torches at his

light. Yet, in some respects, the splendour of his genius has been injurious to severe truth and to the best development of Christian art. He could people the invisible world with myriads of palpable forms, and give them life and action and distinctive character. But he peopled it after the manner of a magician. The bizarre and monstrous images that delighted and horrified the dark ages he freely adopted, grouping them anew with original genius. His clear and tangible inventions reacted upon the vulgar imagination. A crowd of artists covered their panels with distorted representations of his purgatory and hell. All reserved and reverential forbearance in the treatment of these subjects was abandoned. Truth suffered no less than art. The infernal world became, in their feeblar hands, a pandemonium of toads, and lizards, and strange birds, and bats, and colossal crabs, that made themselves monstrous by exchanging limbs with each other. Reality, even poetical, there was none. The devil and his angels were but creatures of the witches' cauldron, and the awful prison-house of hell was no more than the cave of Stygorax!

How different and, as I think, far grander were the indefinite conceptions of Milton. In spite of opinions which have recently been put forth by those who would go back from the sublimity of the undefined to the minute and puerile conceits of mediævalism, I still think that high truth, no less than grandeur and strength, is on the side of Milton when he discards the mesquine and the abominable, and gives the proportions of Satan at a stroke :

“ His form had yet not lost  
All her original brightness, nor appeared  
*Less than archangel ruined !*”

This, surely, is more in harmony with the treatment of holy Scripture. It does not represent the great Enemy by images that are despicable and loathsome to the senses : it speaks of him as one who appeared among the sons of God and conversed with the Almighty ; as one who contended with Michael for the body of Moses, and, because it is unseemly to “ *speak evil of dignities*” (see Jude 8 and 9), was rebuked without “ railing accusation ;” as one who led his hosts against the Hosts of heaven ; as one who bears the titles of “ Prince” and “ God”—the God of

this world and the Prince of the powers of the air. If he is compared to animals at all, it is to the serpent for his proverbial subtilty and wisdom ("Be ye wise as serpents"), and to the lion for his dreaded strength. His ideal figure should be marked with the deep lines of perverted intellect, while his stature is strong and terrible. In no case should he appear as a disgusting abortion, which even all the wicked despise and spurn.

The less lofty but more genial imagination of BOCCACCIO, lax, perhaps, in morals and creed, produced or recast the hundred tales, which became a well-spring of poetry to all the north. Absolute invention is so rare a plant,—blossoming less frequently than the aloe,—that it is treasured not only for its own natural growth, but for the seed which it yields for artificial cultivation. The leading and germinant idea once given, fancy will easily bud upon it, and strike out new branches, and make it beautiful in flower and fruit. But it is only at distant intervals that a master genius arises who can create. HOMER—for his butcherly anatomists are not



to be heard\*—stands alone and intangible. VIRGIL welded the Iliad and Odyssey into one, and made himself a name by refined judgment and melodious rotundity of verse. The Greek dramatists borrowed old subjects perpetually, and added variations to the primitive invention. Horace recommends the poets of his day to do the same. Chaucer drew largely upon Boccaccio; and, in all probability, without the Decameron the Canterbury Tales had not been. Spenser, Shakspeare, Milton, and even Dryden, are indebted to the fertile invention of the Tuscan. He has attained to a proud preeminence, and

• The learned have, I believe, for the most part, given up the conceit, which the authority of WOLF for a time made popular with the philologists, not with the poets, that the Iliad is a collection of rhapsodies by different hands, strung together at last like the beads of a rosary. This is well. The impress which one great inventive genius stamps upon his own coin cannot be scratched out by any scholar's penknife. BENTLEY did some damage to MILTON with his profound prosody; but he never went so far as to suggest that the Paradise Lost was a collection of Puritan hymns and songs sung in divers conventicles, or set to hand-organs in the streets, which one John Milton (who was blind, if, indeed, his blindness were not assumed in imitation of Homer, if any Homer there were), made his daughters write out in a fair hand, when his memory was failing him by the fireside.

succeeded beyond his peers in diffusing himself through the Fair Literature of Europe.

One other name comes vividly before me as I descend slowly to the valley of the Arno. Four centuries ago the churches of Florence resounded to the fervid eloquence of SAVONAROLA. He spake like a prophet, and was accounted such. With the zeal and vehemence of Luther, he made a last spasmodic attempt to reform the Church of Rome within itself. He failed, and perished. He endeavoured to do what modern Romanists tell us Luther should have done—reform the morals and elevate the piety of the age without touching their faith. He strove with heart and soul to rectify abuses, to inspire men with a zeal for God, to renovate a corrupt generation, and to teach the slaves of sin the beauty of holiness. But the creed of ages he would not touch with one of his fingers. And what was the result? His own mind was well-nigh overset in the mighty struggle; his own life was sacrificed in the cause: but the Church of Rome remained what it was. His entire failure to reform it from within was Luther's justification for cleansing an encrusted creed

and striking at the root of papal corruption. Still he fought the fight, if erringly, yet nobly and faithfully; and his name, I would fain trust, is great in heaven! I seem to picture him to myself as standing in his place within the inner circle, with his palm-branch resting on his shoulder, very near to those who wear the Martyrs' crown.

## LETTER VI.

Florence, March 1851.

DEAR S—,

I have just been to see what they told me would be a fine sight—the public procession of the Grand Duke to high service at the church of the Annunciata. It stands in a square surrounded with cloisters on an elevated platform. The Austrian soldiers, who had ornamented their caps with twigs of evergreen, lined one side of the square, the *unadorned* Tuscan troops the other. The streets that abutted on the Place, and the windows that overlooked it, were respectably crowded. Punctually at eleven the Grand Duke's carriage, followed by three or four others, swept round the piazza to the church-door, amid the crash of military music. And then I wondered what had brought the people together! There was no enthusiasm; no eager curiosity; no

cry, good or bad; no stretching of the neck and standing on tiptoe; not even the silence of sullenness, which has a meaning—but the quiet gossip of blank indifference. If the carriages had been all empty the interest would have been the same. The horses and harness were the sole objects that called forth remarks and excited the vulgar attention. I could not but contrast this apathetic reception with the enthusiasm that welcomes our Queen, when on any public occasion she presents herself to the people. To us she is the key-jewel of the arch that gives stability to all our institutions; the symbol of Power dispensing justice with her right hand, and bearing on her left the broad shield of civil protection; the personification of Britannia wearing the crown and reposing with confidence upon her lion. But he who personifies Italian institutions personifies nothing that can call forth popular enthusiasm. He must depend for regard and esteem upon his private and personal virtues, which are, perhaps, known to few and misinterpreted by the multitude.

On one score, at least, the Grand Duke is said to be popular. He is highly religious in

a species of devotion not above the comprehension of the vulgar. He pays much respect to holy water, and crucifixes, and privileged altars. He will alight from his carriage on the highway to pay his devotions at the shrine of a favourite saint: he is orthodox in genuflexions; and he takes off his hat to the Madonna as soon as she comes within range of his lens. It is not to be inferred that there is any want of sincerity, any mere aiming at applause, in this highway devotion: it is simply natural that when grand-ducal religion walks abroad in Tuscany, she should appear in Tuscan costume.

After spending an hour or more in the church of the Santo Spirito, I passed directly into the Pitti Palace, and, in spite of the splendour of this gallery, I felt as if I had exchanged for the worse. The noble pictures that surround the Santo Spirito tend all to encourage one tone of feeling, and that in harmony with the most worthy objects of art. There are few greater enjoyments, in certain moods of mind, than to stroll round some of these wonderful churches, and receive, as it were passively, the impressions which their

walls convey,—putting out of sight the few symbols of false worship that present themselves, and which seem to be insignificant and rare in proportion as historic and metaphorical representations are abundant and grand. These,—to one who is not suffering from the yellow jaundice of controversy,—breathe a spirit of holiness, of admonition, of Christian hope, of Christian triumph. Art seems here to have effected with least alloy the highest purpose for which it was given to man. The eye roves from one sacred subject to another, and the elevated feeling which they inspire is never struck down to the earthly by the blending of the meretricious with the pure. No Bacchante, or Venus, or Cleopatra comes athwart the contemplation of celestial holiness, and stands in juxtaposition with angels and saints, with the pure Virgin and her holy Child, with the cross and Him that bled thereon.

A few Protestants feel scandalized at any pictorial representations in the house of God. But I know not on what ground, except that of their presumed liability to be worshipped,—a liability which depends not on the picture, but wholly upon the instruction they have re-

ceived. There are certain images set upon Romish altars, and Madonnas and other saints placed in positions to invite adoration. These the people are taught to worship, and they do as they are directed. But the great historical frescoes and paintings that adorn the walls are not presented to them as objects of adoration, and it enters into no man's mind to regard them as such. If all the churches in England were frescoed to the roof, there is no one, unless he were prompted by false teachers, who would dream of committing idolatry.

The danger, however terrible it may look in books of controversy, is purely chimerical. The principle, indeed, is already given up by, I believe, all Protestant churches. There are none which I have seen at home or abroad that do not occasionally admit of pictures over the Communion-table, on the ceiling, or in the windows. And, for myself, I must confess I do not see what is gained by discarding all other pictorial representations to make room (as is common in parts of Germany) for the portraits of Luther and Melancthon.

Art is the gift of God, and to be used most worthily in His service. A skill to ornament



the tabernacle in the days of Moses seems to be imputed by him to divine inspiration. "Then wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab and every wise-hearted man, in *whom the Lord put wisdom and understanding to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary.*" (Exod. xxxvi. 1.) And in what way can pictorial art be employed in the divine service, if it be not by portraying those sacred subjects which have a direct tendency to elevate the thoughts to Him or to inspire sympathy with His saints; or else by depicting those metaphorical images which embody general truth, and are a kind of delineated parable? When such works are produced by the few persons who have power to produce them, what place is more appropriate for them than the Christian temple?—provided, of course, their admission be made subordinate to its direct and more important destination: provided, also, the churches are, as they should be, always open to the people.

When the congregations are assembled in Roman Catholic churches there are always peculiarities to be observed, which arrest the attention of a foreign protestant. I saw the mass celebrated by a dignified ecclesiastic, who per-

formed the service with unusual solemnity and decorum. As soon as he retired to the sacristy, which he did with much state, attended by officials and bearing his richly-bound missal in his hand, a crowd of worshippers, whom he had left around the altar, pressed eagerly forward to kiss the spot where the holy sacrament had stood. There was an evident struggle to be foremost, that their lips might come in contact with the marble before the virtue of the recent PRESENCE had departed. I could imagine it a spiritual Bethesda, in which healing depended upon priority. A girl of eighteen, impelled by a keener zeal or the natural vivacity of her sex, succeeded in triumphing over her competitors (many of whom were young men), and reached the goal first. With reverence and radiant satisfaction she deposited a kiss and a small piece of coin upon the altar, and was followed by, perhaps, twenty others who did the same; till the thing surceased of itself, as the ennobling sentiment became extinct in the vulgar operation of kissing each other's kisses.

I may mention that the mode of accenting the Latin prayers seems to be, on many oc-

casions, affected by the modern Italian pronunciation. To prevent any egregious blunder in an ignorant priest, the quantities, I observed, were *marked* in *their* books. Yet there was often a tendency to Italianize the Latin and make terminations in *ine* long. The ejaculation "Domine non sum dignus," which the priest repeats three times before approaching the sacrament, I have heard pronounced exactly in this manner, "Doméene non soom deenious," with an accent on the *ee*.

Shortly after I read a tablet with this inscription, inviting worshippers to the Mother of Mercy: "Whoever recites the litany of the Blessed Virgin before this altar shall obtain an indulgence of two hundred days, which may be applied also to the benefit of the dead."

The latter clause is intended to stimulate the devotion of those who have obtained more indulgences than they need for themselves, or who have lost some dear friend whom they would solace and relieve in the pains of purgatory. Of all the strong holds which the Romish Church has upon the feelings and the imagination, none, perhaps, is more powerful

than the dogma which makes no disseverment of the affections in death, but throws the dead upon the compassion of the living, and places them within reach of human aid. The wronged wife recollects the love of her youth; forgives her wrong-doer in the grave; and, as she fondly deems, returns before the Mother of Mercy his evil with good. Or if conscious of wrong on her part, she inflicts litanies upon her soul as a penance, and drops her atoning tears upon the flames of purgatory. The maiden, whose true love was sanctified, not severed, by the death of her betrothed, feels for him in his fiery trial as she felt in his last sickness, as for one whom she can soothe and aid, and to whom she can still consecrate her days. The human tie is unbroken: she prays for his deliverance as her own: and perhaps, in her readiness to sacrifice all for his sake, she would even throw her soul into the prayer of Moses, "Yet now if thou wilt forgive his sin!—and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written!"

I was present last Sunday at two Lent sermons, at the Annunciata and the Santa Croce, both exclusively controversial;—though one

only in the true unscrupulous spirit of polemics, which is not peculiar to the Romish Church. It was a general and perpetual broadside against Protestantism. The preacher began by laying down the fundamental principle of Protestantism; which was, that every man formed his religion after his own caprice: he presumed to judge of the mysteries of revelation by "this", he said, touching his own forehead: the consequence was, there were as many religions among Protestants as there were men: they threw aside the seven sacraments of the Church, and then one thought that there were three or four, another that there were only two; a third that there were none at all. One believed in the Blessed Trinity, another blasphemed it. One held that Jesus was the son of God, another that He was a mere man, another doubted if He ever lived. They went to greater or less lengths according to their individual fancy: but the principle was the same in all. "Protestantism," he exclaimed with vehemence, but wound down in a descending climax, "is but another name for atheism, impiety, and materialism!"

He then passed on to Protestant morality, and freely quoted Luther and Calvin; but from parts of their works with which I am little acquainted. These arch-reformers, he told the people, asserted that works of piety were absolutely useless: nothing in the world could be of less value than a good work. They had only to *believe*,—not in Catholic truth as taught by the Church,—but in the capricious whims of their teachers, and then they were for ever safe. After once believing it was not possible for them to be lost,—unless, indeed, it were from the pride of good works.

And then look, he said, at the results of Protestantism! Judge by the fruits. The religious wars which have desolated Europe, the revolutions that have overthrown kingdoms, the spirit of anarchy that is abroad in the world threatening to break up all social institutions, have sprung from this source: Luther is the author of all these things! Therefore, he concluded, shun every Protestant that tempts you from the faith! Be assured that their principles are a compound of errors and absurdities! When you once imbibe them, you have entered upon the path-

ways of falsehood and iniquity, which will slowly, perhaps, but at last surely, conduct you to the precipice of perdition.

This is the best account I can give of his sermon from memory, and from my somewhat imperfect comprehension of it.

At the other church, the Santa Croce, the preacher delivered his discourse in the manner of a thesis. "There is no purgatory," he began, "that is the proposition which I undertake to refute." He proceeded to inform his hearers that "in Germany, beyond the Alps," this credence of the Church was regarded as a fond superstition: but there he was at issue with the Germans, and he would proceed to prove to them that it was a truth and no superstition. This he would do from the testimony of holy Scripture, from the fathers, from all tradition, and from the nature of the doctrine itself. From the Bible he would produce only one passage, but it should be in the words of Jesus Christ Himself: "Agree with thine adversary, &c., lest thou be cast into prison: verily, I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence *till thou hast paid the uttermost far-*

*thing.*" This, he said, implied the prospect of payment and of subsequent liberation. He then passed on to Saint Augustine and to general tradition. But the strength of his discourse was reserved to the last; which, indeed, contained little to convince, but much to persuade; and was well calculated to make his audience congratulate themselves upon their traditionary faith. It consisted in a comparison of the doctrine of purification after death for human imperfection, with that of an irremediable hell. How few could venture to think that they were *quite* fit for heaven! how terrible to believe that all these must go to hell! And how consolatory was the doctrine of purgatory to the survivors, who had lost their children, perhaps, in the levity of youth, laden with venial, though not yet immersed in deadly, sins! How comforting to the mother's heart, to feel that she could rescue her child from suffering by her prayers! He enlarged touchingly, as there was ample scope to do, upon this species of consolation; and the people listened with attentive interest, and seemed glad to have their faith confirmed in a persuasion so full of comfort. But he did



not inform them how easy it is to *imagine* consolatory doctrines to meet all the wants and fears and yearnings of heart that belong to suffering humanity, when yet there is no evidence that they are true. He concluded his discourse by apostrophising Florence. She was beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth: she was famed for her splendid temples: her palaces were filled with the treasures of art, that made her the admiration of the world! May she, he concluded, be no less famous for her faith and beautiful in the works of piety.

## LETTER VII.

Pisa, Siena, Rome.

DEAR S—,

The leaning tower of Pisa made me wonder too early in life to repeat the operation now. Horace never made a greater mistake than when he placed happiness in the "nil admirari." Wonderers are always happy, except when they are afraid; and even then it is a "pleasing fear." I was glad, however, to see the friend of my nursery, which divided my astonishment with the tower of Babel; and to retract on the spot the prejudice which I had so early imbibed against the Pisans, as a monstrously wicked race, who had dared to imitate the abomination of the plains of Shinar.

The route from Siena to Viterbo (Pisa and Siena are united by rail) does not offer sufficient objects of attraction to call, after the descriptions of so many travellers, for special

notice. The most interesting portion to me were the wild desolate scenes that lie among the Apennines about Radicofani, where one reaches the brow of a mountain some three thousand feet high, crowned with an old castle, once in possession of a knight of brigands, and well fitted for their present occupation. A few houses under shelter of the precipitous rock that forms the summit, congregate into a small village, and a solitary inn a little lower down by the wayside offers, in its ample chambers, night accommodation to the traveller. Our party consisted chiefly of ladies, and the grand savagery of the panorama around them, and the frowning presence of the robber-castle overhead, evidently affected their imagination. They fortified their courage, as best they might, with good cheer: but when the red beams of the setting sun were slowly ascending the castle walls, leaving gloom and darkness below, they plainly expressed their misgivings; and had already bargained about the distribution of chambers, so that the stronger sex might be within call, when they were greatly relieved by the arrival of a *couple* from Rome, bringing the

intelligence, that the redoubted Passatore had fallen in a fray a few days before, and that his gang was dispersed. Countenances brightened up, and supper was discussed with vivacity. Nevertheless the next morning there were grave reports of the dismal howling of the wind and unearthly noises in the chimney; and one old lady confessed to having passed the night, like a nervous sentinel, in wide-awake fear.

The next day we descended to the Dead Lake of Bolsena. Its shores, except at the extremity at which Bolsena stands, are swept clean of inhabitants by sulphureous exhalations, and every thing around it is silent, solemn, and deathlike. It is the scene of Pliny's floating islands,—probably a congeries of roots and weeds, now bound firmly to the shore. The town still contains many Roman antiquities. Upon our arrival the whole juvenile population turned out into the streets to beg, and during the two or three hours which we spent there, they never ceased from their importunity for an instant. Whenever any one of our party appeared he was surrounded by the uplifted palms of twenty or thirty children, that followed him in all his movements, just as the out-

stretched necks of a flock of geese point to the intrusive stranger. It was in vain to relieve them, in the hope of diminishing their number. Those who received "*grazias*," hastily transferred them to their pockets, lifted up their hands as before, and clamoured anew for charity. We were not sorry to turn our backs upon this insatiable brood of beggarlings.

We began now to lose all fear of the robbers. Indeed all conversation upon the subject had ceased with the silence of a French young lady, who, upon the plea of having no *purse*, had expressed great desire to meet with the banditti—"it would be such a delightful adventure!" But when it was quietly suggested to her that they carried off young ladies to the mountains, her countenance dropped, and she said not a word more about the robbers. As we approached Rome the conversation turned much upon the wonders which we expected to find there. The ladies, as good Catholics, were specially interested in the religious ceremonies, and appeared to be approaching the Holy City as much in the spirit of pilgrims who were anxious for the Pope's benediction, as in that

of tourists in search of health and relaxation. There was an old gentleman of their party—French like the rest,—who prided himself much upon being a *reactionnaire*, but at the same time upon having assisted at the barricades of 1830; and also upon having been yet earlier a thorough revolutionist, and a friend of the friends of Danton. He could not resist the opportunity of expatiating with delight upon the scenic religion of Rome; but then fearing that he had gone too far in his enthusiasm for a pure Parisian and a man who had seen the world, he suddenly drew up, and adroitly but unfairly turned the responsibility upon his wife. “His wife wanted to see these things: she was a devout Catholic—and he too. He thought there ought to be no differences in religious matters, and therefore all men ought to belong to the Church of Rome. Otherwise, in his opinion, all honest men had the same religion—Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Turks, and Brahmins. But Luther had done incalculable mischief, and caused bloody wars about nothing: for all religions were the same at bottom; and if all Christendom would but acknowledge the Catholic faith there would

be an end of these animosities. He honoured the Catholic Church because it was *one*: he admired its imposing ceremonies: these things suited his wife: he should take part in the services at Rome, and certainly stay over the Holy Week. He should have much to see and do, and should accompany his wife everywhere. She was anxious for absolution, and would have much to say at the confessional."

The lady listened patiently to his miscellaneous creed, not as if she were edified, but as if she were used to it, and could not help it. But at this last touch a frown rippled over her brow like the shadow of a light cloud in April.

At last, at nightfall of the third day from Siena, we were at the gates of Rome. We entered at the Porta del Popolo upon the Piazza of the same name, from which the three great streets spread fan-like into the city. There was nothing to excite enthusiasm: for it was already night, and the dingy lamps barely tarnished the darkness in the broad empty Place. Our minds were full of base materialities. For the crowds of visitors that gathered to the Holy Week made it uncertain

whether we should not have to encamp for the night in that same Place of darkness. The like had happened to some travellers whom we had heard of; and therefore our first great concern was to secure some convenient nook beneath the tiles of the Eternal City.

One of my first visits was to divine service in the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican, at which the Pope officiated in person. We were there early and had much time to admire the unrivalled beauty of the ceiling, before our eyes were called down from the most sublime efforts of Michael Angelo to the scarlet caps of the Cardinals. They walked up the Chapel at intervals, preceded by two officials in black, and followed by a third who seemed chiefly to be occupied in untwisting their long crimson trains. The aisle was lined by the Pope's Swiss guard,—a fine set of men, wearing feathers of yellow and white, and clad in a strange dress with alternate stripes of red, yellow, and black. It is said to be a very ancient costume, and pronounced to be very fine. Otherwise I should have called it Harlequinian. No one is admitted into the Pope's presence, even in the house of God, except in full black dress. Frock coats



and suspicious vests are infallibly stopped by the master of the ceremonies, and their owners not permitted to pass the bar. Ladies are always contraband, where the Pope is: but they are allowed to occupy certain benches below the bar, upon appearing in black, without bonnets and sably veiled. This is an effectual penance to the vain. They arrest no attention, but are all *set in jet* just alike, and as undistinguishable as the tenants of a rookery. When the Cardinals had slowly taken their places, the Pope entered by a private door at the east end, wearing a large white mitre. After a while he ascended the throne on the north side of the altar, and sat in state looking younger, and fresher, and better, than I had anticipated. The service now began, and while the quire was singing, the Cardinals one by one approached his Holiness, and bent to him, while he held out his hand to be kissed. Others knelt down at his feet in utter humility. Some waved candles before him, some swung incense; and as the fumes rose up around him I could not but call to mind the passage, which I have so often heard applied in this direction, "He as God

sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."

The Chapel with all its surpassing beauty does not strike one as devotional, and (as was to be expected in a show-place) there was little appearance of devotion in the congregation. Every one was on the *qui vive* to see the Pope, to hear him speak, or to watch the motions of the Cardinals. They had laid aside their square caps and sat with small scarlet saucer-like caps, that just fitted the crown of the head. I cannot undertake to tell you how often the Pope's mitre was removed by the proper authorities, and how often put on again; nor at what points of the service a youth crouched down on his knee and turned himself into a living lectern, supporting a large breviary in front of his Holiness. The whole service as *divine* was disagreeable: every one seemed to be going through a state ceremony. At one point only did I feel interest in it in any sense that could be deemed proper to the place. It was when the Pope descended from his throne, laid aside his mitre, and knelt with his Cardinals on the floor before the altar, and seemed by that one act of homage to the Invisible to confess that God alone was great.

Many Italian ladies had their prayer-books, and were reciting their private prayers during the whole service, the sermon (which was in Latin) included: but most of them precisely in the manner of one who has undertaken to count so many thousand in an hour. The operation went on mechanically, like German wool-knitting, and did not in the least distract their attention from the Pope and the French officers. I could not but observe one sable-satined lady, who kept swinging gracefully in her hand a pearl rosary, which she managed better than a fan, as if beating time to her lips, which were in rapid and perpetual motion,—now laughing, now chatting, now saying a prayer, which she beaded off on the rosary; then reversing the operation,—praying, chatting, laughing, and from time to time pointing out to her companion how many beads she had got through. I presume she was not pretending to worship any body or any thing, (for they have a great choice of objects here); but was most likely clearing off a penance imposed upon her by her confessor at the close of the Carnival.

There are more earnest worshippers in Rome

than those who bask in the presence of the Pope, and holier places in my estimation than the Sistine Chapel. One of these nobler temples is the majestic ruin of the Colosseum. Founded by Vespasian,—built in part by the captive Jews,—hallowed by the blood of Ignatius and many martyrs,—and afterwards in its state of splendid decay, among fallen and standing arches, consecrated to the memory of those faithful witnesses whose blood had dried into its arena, it is now the Holy Place to many an unobtrusive devotee, who kneels before the Cross amid the fragments of its broken pillars, and worships in the open face of heaven. It comes nearest to the primitive temples in times preceding revelation; the pure sky of Italy is overhead, and looks through the lofty archways and windows; in its side-cells the martyrs girded their loins to the last fight; its ornaments are of nature's handicraft—shrubs, and plants, and wild flowers in unnumbered profusion overhanging its corridors and pilasters. And there before the Cross I have seen the day-labourer kneeling, wholly wrapt up in his own devotions, and unconscious of the many wanderers among the ruins. I have seen him

burst into a flood of tears, touched by the remembrance of his sin, or of the mercy that has blotted it out! There too, once a week, a congregation is drawn together to hear a monk preach to them in energetic terms of the religion of Jesus; of that religion which has changed the amphitheatre of blood into a house of prayer for all nations.

How like—in another mood—did it seem to me to the house which the Master built upon a rock, with the assurance that it should stand for ever. The foundation, they will have it, was laid here. The prime builder chose out a site in Rome and reared that spiritual building, which the gates of hell should never destroy. But how—if this be so—is its first glory departed! What rents are in its walls! How is half the building fallen away, and lying around it in a thousand fragments! Weeds and thistles are in all its chambers, and lizards and creeping things overrun its walls. Yet, in spite of all, how sublime and beautiful is its decay! Compared with its former self, it is but a ruin: but compared with any temple that heathen hands have reared, it stands out in unrivalled majesty.

Nay, they will tell us, this is no emblem of the Catholic Church: *that* is to be sought for under the perfect dome of St. Peter! Thither let us repair.

Without accepting the hyperboles of Byron, we would however approach it with the remembrance that its destination is, in the main, as truly, as it is sublimely represented in the prophecy which he puts into the mouth of Dante:

“ While still stands  
The austere Pantheon, into heaven shall soar  
A dome, its image, while the base expands  
Into a fane surpassing all before  
Such as all flesh shall flock to kneel in; ne’er  
Such sight hath been expanded by a door  
As this, to which all nations shall repair  
And lay their sins at this huge gate of heaven!”

If you ask why, being neither architect nor artist, I presume to feel for myself in this Temple of Temples, I refer you to the above lines. “Fit audience find though few” is no motto for the vestibule of a cosmopolitan fane. He who builds a church for the multitude must be judged by them: his success is to be estimated by its effect upon their perceptions: and to be admired by a select corps of artists

is slender compensation for repelling the devotional instincts of the many. If he have raised a mere Palace of Art when he meant to build a temple to the Almighty, his work is essentially a failure.

As one therefore of the multitude, who go up to St. Peter's as to a house of prayer, I would claim the liberty of receiving impressions without book.

Seen at a sufficient distance, St. Peter's rises in calm and august grandeur, and looks altogether worthy of the object for which it was destined. A fitter temple can hardly be desired for the worship of the INCARNATE. Ideas of the abstract INFINITE will always better harmonize with the Gothic. But as you approach it on level ground, the dome, which is its crown of glory, retires behind the façade; and this latter hides the *church* entirely, and threatens to become nothing more than a very fine street-building; from which it is saved by the circus of grand colonnades, and the broad flight of steps that ascend to its five gates. But once enter the portal, and the Temple returns in its full sublimity. The eye gathers up the six hundred feet of length at a glance,

clearly lightened from above at the transept, where it shows at an immense height a broad *lune* of its dome, supported by two superb evangelists in mosaic. Beneath is a segment of its grand inscription "TU ES PETRUS, &c.," largely legible at so great a distance. Its fine proportions, its colossal pillars, its freedom of space, the roundness and perfection of roof and arch, give it an appearance at once tranquil and sublime: not in that sublimity which suggests and indicates something indefinitely greater than itself, and which is the true sublimity of adoration; but in that which is complete in its own amplitude, and impresses the puny spectator with a sense of his insignificance.

But to my mind, in its broad features, it does little more. It does not infuse mysterious awe, or yearning aspirations. It is in no sense "the gate of heaven:" it leads to nothing beyond itself. It is rather to be considered as a triumphal monument erected in memorial of the establishment of religion upon earth. It seems to say that a glorious work has been accomplished, and it is time to repose upon it, and exult in it, and enjoy it. "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms



of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever!"

The mosaics, frescoes, and paintings are, to an ordinary spectator, beyond all praise. Copies of the *chefs-d'œuvres* of the first artists, made chiefly in mosaic-work, confront originals without cause of shame. But the minor ornaments are often in questionable taste; and the statuary, for the most part, though vigorous, is glaring and exaggerated. The black and hugely gigantic bishops over the east altar, with their prodigious mitres and their golden robes doubling on all the winds, are much too good for gingerbread,—yet they always suggest it. Then there are large-limbed, swollen-bodied babies hanging on all the pillars and misrepresenting cherubs. Some of them seen near are fatly ridiculous. But the dimensions of the temple are so grand, that they recede into insignificance. In spite of a few drawbacks, it stands in proud preeminence as the noblest temple of its kind, perhaps of any kind, which the world has ever seen. The more frequently it is visited the more strongly does this impression prevail.

The VATICAN overwhelms one with its

wealth. I have returned from it with a confused blending of images, which I hope to fix more definitely in subsequent visits. From the Apollo Belvedere to the little petulant satyr that kicks out his hoof from the sarcophagus, every thing calls aloud for notice, and having once gained it, rivets your attention. The mosaic figures on the floor look up into your face, and the frescoes on the ceiling call your regards upward, and statues and reliefs and inscriptions, without number, arrest your attention midway, and you move about in a world that art has peopled by its own creative power, and can hardly conceive the reality of the things around you. The large expectations which I brought with me were largely exceeded, and the riches and glory of Rome were never so strongly impressed upon my imagination. We wandered from chamber to chamber absolutely oppressed by a sense of admiration. The Apollo, the Antinous, the Laocoon, were already sufficiently familiar in their general outlines to be viewed with more criticising regards: but so many novel and unexpected objects crowded upon our æsthetic perceptions, that we paused and breathed deep,

as men who are staggered by their own emotions.

I send you these first impressions of the Vatican in all their confusion, as well to impart a general sense of its multiplicity of magnificence as to explain my inability to enter into details.

## LETTER VIII.

Rome, April 1851.

DEAR S—,

Palm Sunday is the great day, on which commence the ceremonies of the Holy Week. We were in St. Peter's by nine o'clock, in order to secure seats for the ladies of our party. They were admissible only by tickets and under cover of black veils, to screen them from the Cardinals. We obtained also for ourselves a very favourable position for observing the chief ceremonies. The princely Cardinals in their gilt coaches, with three glittering footmen behind each, and accoutred with trappings of the most flaming gorgeousness, drove up to the beautiful gate of the temple in all humility, abjuring, perhaps, secretly and inwardly the pomps and vanities of this wicked world. The cathedral was lined with soldiers, the French occupying one side

and the Papal troops the other, while the motley guard figured in all their colours about the high altar. This altar rises just beneath the dome, and is under cover of a majestic canopy ninety feet in height, supported by four twisted bronze pillars (the bronze from the ancient Pantheon), ornamented with a tracery of foliage. In front of it, descending to the level of the pavement, is a marble balustrade, on which a hundred lamps, or more, are kept perpetually burning. The steps that ascend to it all round were covered, for the occasion, with a rich carpet, which extended eastward into the tribune or chancel, till it was received by the green-baize and crimson benches appropriated to the Cardinals. At the extremity of these, just before the east altar, stood the crimson throne erected for the Pope, against a lofty screen of the same colour. On the pinnacles of this temporary screen fluttered six little golden cherubs, suspending from golden chains three more cherubic playfellows, of whom one bore a grand tiara in his hands just over the Pope's head,—ready to crown or to extinguish him. The Harlequinian guard now exerted

themselves to thrust back the people from the high altar towards the transepts and aisles, in order to leave a broad marble avenue up the whole length of the nave, in preparation for the arrival of the Cardinals and Pope. At length the head of the procession appeared at the west door. It was preceded by the body-guard of princes and nobles, who constitute a veritable Legion of Honour, worthy to hold the Pope's stirrup. They made a fine and imposing appearance in their splendid uniforms of azure and gold. The Cardinals moved slowly up the nave, and it seemed a tedious pilgrimage from the west end to the east. Last of all came the Pope, borne aloft in his chair of state by eight or ten stalwart men in scarlet from head to foot. He blessed the people as he came, stretching his hands over them and looking down with mild benevolence. They bowed their heads to his blessing, as the ripe corn before the western breeze. They set him at last upon his throne in the tribune, with the long lawn of baize before him, on which might have stood an ordinary church. He was supported right and left by Cardinals and stately bishops,

and more remotely by the erect glittering swords of his guard of nobles. Singing now broke out from the iron grating just above our heads in the south wall, in which was engaged a nest of choristers. Kissing of hands and divers genuflexions proceeded. Two attendants unfolded the robes of the Pope, and presented to the people a full view of his white under-costume from head to foot. They looked at him for a few seconds (the object of which I could not learn, unless it were to ascertain that he was not a man of straw), and then with great dignity wrapped his robe round him again, and he sat all crimson and gold. Once more the two attendants spread wide the folding-doors of his vesture, another brought a crimson-cushioned stool and laid it devoutly at his feet. He knelt down upon it the sixteenth part of a minute, or while one might fairly count seven; then rose and reclined back upon his throne, and the folding-doors of his vesture were closed, and he sat motionless as before. But now the service proceeded in earnest. A youth held before him a book, from which he intoned his part of the performance in a clear strong voice,

that passed by the high altar unbroken, and died at last midway in the nave. Meanwhile, at his side stood a whole forest of ornamented wands or thyrsi, made of palm wood, and intended to represent branches. They were brought in pairs, one from each side, and laid across his knees, where they received his blessing. They were then immediately taken up by two Cardinals (pairing before him from north and south), who kissed them first, and then bore them with solemnity, if not with satisfaction, to their places. The Cardinals had only *bowed* to their master, the rest *knelt* as they received the palm, and some kissed the holy slipper. This process continued for an immoderate time, till not only all the Cardinals, bishops, and ecclesiastical officials had received the pontifical boon, but also a great number of grandees, foreign diplomatists, military officers (including a few in English uniform), devout travellers, and learned men, and students of Romish universities. At first I looked upon these donations as something that conferred special honour; but they cheapened in my estimation as I grew weary, and especially as I learnt from an Italian gentle-



man that nothing was more easy than to obtain one: I could have had one myself if I had been so minded, and that without prejudice to my being a protestant. When all had been made Palmers, from cardinal to sacristan, from prince to pilgrim, the cathedral at the east end wore a new appearance. It was a shrubbery of thyrsi. But when the Cardinals sat down they laid their palm-wands in parallels on the ground before them, making a broad white fringe to the baize.

They now took a turn round the church in gorgeous procession. I can pretend to no extreme accuracy, but as far as my eye and a note-book served me, the order was as follows:

20 Ecclesiastics, entirely in black.

10 in red.

30 in red with white tippets.

30 in purple with white lawn.

16 Cardinals with purple tippets.

20 Bishops in mitres.

14 attendants and guards.

The Pope in his chair aloft.

80 miscellaneous followers bearing palms.

In all about 220.

After they had made the tour and taken

their places again in the tribune, the Pope being seated upon his crimson throne, with a broad empty *street* before him up to the high altar, the quire began to chant the lesson for the day. It comprised the two long chapters, the 26th and 27th of St. Matthew,—very appropriate to the occasion, but hardly to the assembly. When I saw the bishop of Rome surrounded by soldiers and drawn swords, representing his civil as well as ecclesiastical authority, I wondered if it struck any one else as it did me, when they chanted to the Pope, over the casques of his body-guard, “All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.” But this sense of incongruity was soon forgotten, and, as the service proceeded, gave place to very different feelings.

The chorus was perched up in the iron cage above our heads, but the three solo singers stood on the pavement, facing three men who served, as usual, instead of lecterns. They rested the great folio upon their forehead and two hands, so as to present it open to the singer. The principal narrative was chanted exclusively by one person, the *part* of the Redeemer by another (*i. e.* all the words which

Jesus uttered), and a little black man chanted for Judas, and afterwards for Pilate. The central singer stopped when he came to a *speech* in the Gospel, and left it to be sung in character by one of the others. On a sudden there was a strange confused clamour from the cage-like grating above us, which we found to arise from the chorus, who represented the multitude, singing the discordant cries of the False Witnesses. Again they broke forth at the words, "Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee?" Again they cried simultaneously for "Barab-bas," and chanted the solemn imprecation, "His blood be on us and on our children!" They mocked Him saying, "Hail, king of the Jews;" and finally taunted Him in His agony, "Thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days, save thyself! If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross!"

This, I confess, was to me the truly interesting part of the service. The vocal singing (for they have no instrumental music) occupied a very considerable time: and, as it proceeded, I lost, gradually, all sense of the gorgeous pomps that surrounded me: the Pope

and his Cardinals were gone: the glittering swords in the temple, the wands, and the plumes, and the motley guard, had no power to disturb me; I was absorbed and overpowered by the simple majesty of the Gospel heard in such a place and at such a time. I felt that here at least we were one. Over the touching narrative of the Redeemer's passion, and with His very words ringing in my ears, I could know of no dispute between Papist and Protestant; I felt that nothing around me could destroy the force of that saying, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life!" So much did I rejoice to feel in fellowship with the whole Church before the cross of the dying Saviour, and to find the words of Christ stronger for good than any associations around me for evil, that I was moved even to tears, and with difficulty disguised my emotions.

Perhaps the first unpleasant impression that roused me from my reverie arose from the reflection that the far greater part of the assembly were cut off from any participation in my feelings by their ignorance of the Latin tongue. I had rejoiced in the simple narra-

tive of the Gospel: but alas! to the illiterate it was an unknown sound; it was music, and no more! Could I wonder that the man by my side was all the while reciting his own private devotions, without any regard to what was publicly said or sung?

The rest of the service had little tendency to renew my better impressions. Two Cardinals officiated at the high altar, and left a subdeacon behind them holding the chalice in a strained attitude, with statue-like immobility, for so great a length of time, that one could hardly believe that he was alive, or if alive, that he could have endured it. The *Creed* was chanted, and took some time; but long before it was finished, I observed many of the Cardinals quietly sitting down. Upon remarking upon this seeming impropriety, my Italian friend replied, that "they had already *said* the *Creed* themselves, and were not obliged to wait for the music."

The Pope left the church with the same pomp as he entered it, blessing the people with unwearied benevolence from his high and tottering seat. As soon as his back was turned the palms were treated, I thought,

with little respect. Some looked as if they did not know what to do with them: some were giving them to their sweethearts: some to any lady that wanted one: and a decently dressed man offered us his for a "consideration."

So vast is this temple that there was room and to spare, though half Rome and all the "pilgrims" assisted at the solemnity. A width of forty or fifty feet was kept open down the whole length of the nave when the soldiers marched out; yet the crowds retired back without inconvenience into the recesses of the magnificent aisles.

## LETTER IX.

Rome, April 1851.

DEAR S—,

A friend of mine, well experienced in Roman sight-seeing, gave me the judicious advice not to visit objects of the same class continuously. Pictures upon pictures, churches upon churches, ruins upon ruins, become wearisome at last and pall upon the fancy. But in a miscellaneous *disarrangement* of objects the interest is kept up to the end. Let a day or two devoted to modern art be followed by a communing with the dead among the fragments of antiquity. Attendance upon religious ceremonies may give place to an excursion to Tivoli or Albano. Thus the mind remains always fresh for the work of the day. To this cause you are indebted for the sudden transitions which I make without law of as-

sociation; as at present from St. Peter's to the tomb of Scipio.

Scipio's tomb, the Columbaria, and the excavations now carrying forward on the Appian way, may be visited in one afternoon. The rival antiquarians have so shaken our faith in almost every thing Roman, that it is delightful to find oneself at last in the undisputed tomb of the Scipios. But, alas, its chief attraction is gone! Its most interesting sarcophagus has been deposited in a museum, where it loses nine-tenths of its value. It were something to go under the earth to pay honour to the memory of great men and sages in their own silent chambers, where they had reposed for 2000 years, and should have reposed for ever! But the lust of enriching museums is the modern demon of destruction, all the more intolerable because he wears the mask of Protection and Conservatism. It is this demon which rifles the tombs of the dead, demolishes temples, and breaks up ancient monuments, that it may carry them away from their own place and set them up on pedestals where they have no meaning, and but a faint shadow of their original glory. Professing the highest



regard for antiquity, it dismembers, Medea-like, its own children in the vain confidence that when it puts them together again, they will live as before. When Mummius naïvely told his human beasts of burden, that if they damaged the works of Corinthian art entrusted to their care, they should be made to replace them, his menace was scarcely more difficult of execution than the attempt to collect the dry bones of the old world in a menagerie, and bid them live. A museum is a good foundling hospital for antiquities that have no parentage: but, for the most part, their interest depends upon local associations: they are valuable only in their own place, in a neighbourhood of kindred memorials. In their own family tomb beside the Appian way the Scipios would have drawn a new *via sacra* to their resting-place, and thousands of pilgrims would have felt their hearts beat with emotion in the chambers of their long repose. But who, except the showman of curiosities, cares for the Scipios in a museum?

The Columbaria, which adjoin the tomb of the Scipios, are at present of deeper interest, because they have been left comparatively un-

disturbed. You descend to that of Cneius P. Hylas by a deep staircase into a nearly cubical room, lofty enough to admit of nine tiers of openings like dovecot holes (whence it took the name Columbarium), in which are deposited the calcined ashes of the dead. Attached to each is the name of the deceased, and often of his occupation. The dates belong chiefly to the times of Augustus and Tiberius, and are very conspicuous and legible. It was, we were told, the common burial chamber of slaves and freedmen.

Many of the inscriptions breathe a spirit of affection. A father builds a dove-nitch to his "dearest daughter," another to his "sweetest child;" and it will be gratifying to our female friends in England to learn how many of these poor slaves had meritorious wives. "To my well-deserving wife" is one of the most frequent inscriptions. Sex. Manlius Hilarius, by way I suppose of securing his right of sepulture, informs you, that he has "bought two urns, or *ollæ*, of P. Clodius." Many others record similar transactions. One woman was midwife to Marcella, and her ashes are ex-officially proud of it. One man leaves an inscription,

which I would be glad to believe had some effect in saving his *olla* from the Museum,

“Touch me not!

O mortal!

Reverence the Manes Deos!”

I recollect however, on the other hand, that a poor plundered freedman calls out to no purpose from the walls of the Capitolian Gallery, “Per deos superos inferosque rogo ne ossuaria velis violare!”

A visit to this place brings forcibly before one's mind the rival advantages of interment or cremation. Custom fluctuated even among the ancient Romans. They appear to have buried in earliest times, when the population was scanty and it was easy to put their dead out of sight, and to have burnt the bodies at a later period, perhaps (especially in a warm climate) from motives of convenience and health. As the Jews were accustomed to inter, they naturally brought the practice into the Christian Church, of which at first they were the sole members; and subsequent ages, without injunction to that effect, or any obligation of necessity, followed in fact the example of primitive times. But in a case of this kind,

involving no point of doctrine, every one is at liberty to form his own opinion, and it is open to discussion which of the two modes is in certain circumstances the most eligible. After visiting these columbaria the prejudice which I had imbibed against cremation was considerably weakened, and it seemed to me, there were circumstances in which it might be preferred. The religious associations which are made to circulate around the grave, might, and in a little time would, be equally attached to the funereal urn. The body might be given "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust" as well after it had come forth as refined gold from the purifying fire, as when it was defiled by the touch of dissolution. The enquiry is not whether a few rich men can embalm their friends, or hermetically seal them up to the Day of Decision, with more satisfaction to their feelings than if they consigned them to the funeral pile: but whether the millions, who are doomed to indiscriminate sepulture, are treated with more pious and christian regard by blending them together in loathsome pits of corruption, where no man can find his own,

than by collecting their separate ashes in vessels of honour, and placing them in pure chambers beyond the reach of pollution. Let any one, for example, look down the trap-doors above the common cemetery at Naples, through which the naked bodies of the poor are dropped one upon another, and all upon a mass of horrible corruption,—where in a literal sense “their worm dieth not,”—and then let him stand in this sacred columbarium with the rows of sepulchral vases around him, and say from his own instinctive feelings *which* abode he would choose for the final resting-place of his dearest friends? *which* seems to be most pure, most worthy to be christian? Whether is it treating the dead with most respect to cast them into a pit of loathsomeness and pollution, or to cleanse them once, like a holy sacrifice, by fire, and collect their ashes in urns to be consigned to christian Hope to keep in purity till the resurrection? It may be that, from long association, no considerable number of persons would wish for any change at present: but if the population of Europe should continue to increase for two centuries more as rapidly as it has done of late, it is possible

that, by that time, our great cities may have replaced their pestilential cemeteries by pure columbaria;—or shall our charnel-houses never be cleansed except by the last great fire?

## LETTER X.

Rome.

DEAR S—,

It would be a hopeless task to give you any adequate account of the three hundred and sixty basilicas and churches that adorn the Eternal City. All the more important ones have some special interest of their own, and if they were found elsewhere would be the objects of detailed admiration. Some are famous as the site of heathen temples, and yet retain a portico, a column, a tribune, or the fragment of a wall, that was originally dedicated to the worship of Jupiter, Venus, or Vesta. Many contain statues and paintings that would confer celebrity on a gallery of art in any city of Europe. Many glow from their marble floor to the summit of their lofty cupolas with frescoes and mosaics admirable for their execution or precious for

their quaint antiquity. In some the gorgeous appliances for Divine worship are the chief attraction, and in very many a treasury of strange relics, which no reasonable man can believe in, incite the curiosity or the devotion of the vulgar. In others the ear of credulity is soothed with romances of miraculous adventure. For some cause or other, every church within sight will repay a visit, and I would advise you, as a matter of course, to turn into it when nothing pressing obliges you to pass by.

Details of peregrinations from shrine to shrine would be a tedious story. In the course of one morning I have seen relics enough to satisfy me for life. I have seen the very post, now transmuted into precious stone, at which the Redeemer was scourged, and the wood of the very table at which He ate the Last Supper. I have seen the impression of His two feet in sandstone, petrified after the manner of a geological specimen. I have stood under the slab, supported by four pillars, which measured His exact height, more than six feet. I have seen young women, clad in white from their head-dress to their ankles,



staggering on their knees up the marble staircase of Pilate, devoutly kissing every step, but especially the cross upon the last, with thankful effusion. Two Priests drew near and looked on with satisfaction, while others were running the *kneeling* race of humility. We expected to see them also fall upon their knees: but they turned aside and *walked* up the bye staircase. Yet a little while after young children were kissing their hands with profound respect and soliciting their blessing. The imagination of an English lady, a Protestant, was so much captivated by this Pilate-scene, and so confident was she of the authenticity of the staircase, that, as she frankly confessed, she was much disposed to climb the Hill of Difficulty with the rest. She hesitated however when I informed her, that I had seen the duplicate staircase in Germany at Kreutznach, and was there assured that it had beyond question the better claims to genuineness. Among other tokens it retained a visible spot of the real blood. She inquired eagerly if I had seen it. I was obliged to acknowledge that I had not: but upon my inquiring for it, the sacristan had pointed with his wand to a brazen cross on

the upper step, and informed me that it was "*under that!*"

The Church of St. Prassede is celebrated for its memorials of the saints, and exposes on two large marble slabs an inventory of its spoils. I quote a few of its earlier *items*:

One tooth of St. Peter.

One tooth of St. Paul.

A piece of the Virgin's Mary's chemise.

A piece of the girdle of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Some of the ground on which Jesus prayed before His Passion. Arms and heads of divers Apostles, Martyrs, and Saints complete the list, and show the riches of the sacred museum.

At another church, the Ara Cœli, we were permitted to see the celebrated Bambino or wooden Babe, looking very much like a child's painted doll,—painted, however, we were assured, by St. Luke himself; and famed for its power of deciding between life and death when carried into a sick man's chamber, and of procuring safe deliverances to expectant mothers when brought in contact with their persons. The sacristan informed us that its assistance was called for almost every day. A number of tapers were lighted round its

cot, or coffin, before it was opened to our unbelieving gaze. The profusion of diamonds, pearls, and precious stones, with which it was covered, bore witness to the gratitude of the credulous. The "will-worship and voluntary humility" of the Pilate staircase, followed up by the ineffable folly of this doll-idolatry, left us in doubt for the time whether in religious perceptions the Romans were in advance of the Chinese. It produced a curious effect upon one of our party—an Indian officer—who observed, that "he should go back to India with a much higher opinion of the native idolatries than he had entertained before; they were less contemptible than the Italian."

We now descended the Mamertine prisons, two-dungeons-deep under ground; full of associations of their own, independently of the legends of the church. We were perhaps in the oldest prison in the world. Built by Etruscan hands in the earliest times of the Roman state, before the rise of the Republic, it became the dungeon of political offenders, especially of those who were to be put out of the world in darkness. Here Jugurtha (the Abdel Kader of Numidia) was starved to death, and Cethegus

and his compeers were strangled by the *extremely diligent*\* virtue of Cicero. But as the Pope has mounted St. Paul and St. Peter on the columns of Antoninus and Trajan, and bidden them take possession of the monuments of the heathen, so do these Apostles—the Key-bearer, and the Sword-bearer—monopolize in the legends of the church, the interest of the Mamertine prisons. Here they were confined together in expectation of their martyrdom: here they converted their gaolers; and when water was wanting for their baptism, a pure fountain sprung up in the lowest dungeon at their feet, from which we had the pleasure of drinking a refreshing draft. Thus far the tale rests on a semblance of evidence, or upon the congruity of the miracle to the notions of the legendary age. Had it stopped here many Protestant visitors, I conceive, as well as Romanists, would have yielded to it, without repugnance, an unenquiring acquiescence. But in the mouths of the vulgar, these legends overrun themselves with wonders: and accordingly St. Paul is made to mar the whole thing by a miracle too undignified for comedy.

\* “*Meâ summâ diligentia.*”

As he was going down the stairs into the dungeon, one of the ruffian guards knocked his head against the wall; and the wall made the most of its opportunity and took a *profile* of the Apostle! There it stands before you! The high cheek bone, the nose, the forehead, even the bushy beard, have all buried themselves in the stone and stamp an eternal basso-relievo! Even our guide, Italian as he was, had some compunctions, and after telling us the legend with grave decorum he added in an undertone, as he followed us down the steps, "C'est une histoire, messieurs!"

The Church of the Capuchins is famed for one of the most successful efforts of Guido's pencil. The archangel Michael triumphs over the Devil in ineffable beauty,—executing his high work as the minister of Divine judgment, not of human passion. It is delightful to see this artist, who in his less happy moments loses himself in an elegant weakness, brace up his strength to portray an angel that shall be worthy the companionship of gods (Ps. lxxxii. 6). Doubtless if those Angelic, or departed, beings who have stood for their likeness in thin air to the imagination of the artist, could have selected

for themselves, we may suppose that, while Cleopatra would have sat willingly to Guido, Michael and Raphael would rather have chosen their terrestrial namesakes: but if Michael would resign something of his strength and sublime dignity for more than human beauty, and an expression of pure moral triumph, like that of good over evil, he would scarcely find a more perfect personification of his celestial virtues than here looks down upon the vanquished Demon.

On the pavement of this church is one monumental stone that bears no name or date, and records no more than is contained in the blank inscription:

“Here lies dust, ashes, and nothingness.”

But beneath it are collected the bones of the BARBERINI, and he who placed it over them was a Cardinal. The dry skulls and cross-bones of this illustrious family are piled up and arranged in ornamental patterns in the first of the five vaults beneath the church, which serve the purpose of five churchyards. Half the floor of each has been excavated, and then filled up with earth imported from Jerusalem;—making a plot of garden ground,

tidily kept, in whose sacred soil the dead are interred. But as these holy resting-places are very small, and in great demand, the monks have devised a method of accommodating every body. The fresh corpses are duly buried in the plot of holy land; but, as soon as time and quick-lime have picked clean the bones, they are taken out, and built up in a fantastic manner into architectural ornaments round the vaults. The whole is a grotto of human bones; and here and there in niches, or at the mouth of an artificial cave, stands, like a sentinel, or a hermit, the skeleton of a Capuchin in the habiliments of his order. The effect is strange, but not solemn or impressive. It looks like Death's Folly,—as if he would turn the grave into a palace of art, and mock the living with the rich tracery and mosaic-work of their fathers' bones.

While service is performing in the churches the entrance to them is usually guarded by a sort of mat, covered with ticking or leather, that is suspended as a screen before the door. It is pushed aside upon entering and closes after you. At St. Peter's and some of the larger churches this screen is so heavy, that

weak women must exert themselves to remove it. But then the beggars are always there to offer their assistance. When any respectable person approaches they officiously hold open the screen, and beg for charity as you pass. It is necessary to be alert on these occasions: for if you are off your guard it sometimes happens that while you are giving them *baiocchi* in one hand, they will help themselves to your pocket-handkerchief with the other.

Mr. Dickens, who describes so graphically what he has seen, has in moments of forgetfulness a graphic imagination. Thus he complains of the monotony of the Church services in Rome: "the same lamps dimly burning, &c., the same priest's back with *the same large cross embroidered on it, &c.*" To say nothing of the lamps, I have been so far from wearied out with the *sameness* of the large embroidered cross, that I have never once seen it. In the splendid wardrobe of chasubles at St. Peter's, I found some of them *white* for the Virgin Mary's days, some *sombre* for days of mourning, some *golden* for high festivals, but not a cross among them. The sacristan told us, that the large cross on the back was a Gallican, not a Roman ornament.



In the evening I was at the Sistine Chapel to hear the *Miserere*. But the crush was so great, and the heat so oppressive, that I could not stay to the end of it. My place was in the midst of a little knot of priests, who were plying their breviaries and keeping up a conversation with all around them at the same time: in the midst of which I had my pockets plundered under the benevolent eye of the Pope! They did not join in the general service, at least till they had cleared off their special prayers; which they recited in a scarcely audible whisper, out of time with each other, and still more with his Holiness. Their rapidity of recitation I have often observed: but one priest, from whose book I read, exceeded every thing of the kind I had seen. His lower jaw moved with incredible velocity. It was more like the vibration of a steel spring, than anything which belonged to articulate utterance. I endeavoured to follow him through the Psalms: but before I had cleared five verses he was at the bottom of the page,—then over another leaf,—and so on, at the speed of an express train, that stops at no intermediate stations. Nothing but early prac-

tice, like that which forms the drummer's hand to his work, could have given to human lips such rapid articulation. But one could not help asking, what possible duty was fulfilled by dashing through the prayer-book as a young lady runs her fingers down the harpsichord. Surely one mental ejaculation to Him who would be worshipped in spirit and in truth, is more devout, more pious, more profitable, than a full parade of this vesper-tattooing!

## LETTER XI.

Rome, April 1851.

DEAR S—,

On Thursday, in Holy Week, we took our places before noon on a private balcony, that just faces the gallery or lodge, as it is called, of St. Peter's, from which the Pope publicly blesses the people. But we were too distant, and there was in fact nothing to see but the splendid Circus lined with French soldiers and Swiss guards, and beyond them a crowd of people and a crowd of carriages hemmed in by the encircling colonnades. Precisely at twelve the Pope made his appearance in crimson robes, attended by Cardinals. He stood motionless, and looked in the distance like a coral ornament set just in the centre of the façade. The multitude that filled the Place went down upon their knees (with the exception of a few obstinate here-

tics), the soldiers lowered their arms, the Pope expanded his hands over them in dumb show, —and then, on a sudden, there was a crash of sound: the guns fired, the trumpets blew, and the whole multitude rose and rushed towards the cathedral,—elbowing, pushing, panting, perspiring; now wedging themselves for an instant into a conglomerate at the doors, then expanding again over the nave, which had space enough for all comers. The object of endeavour was to secure a seat for the ladies on the reserved benches in the south transept, to which they were admissible, as usual, by ticket and black veil. Here the preparations were made for washing the Apostles' feet. The thirteen pilgrim-priests who had been chosen to represent the twelve true men and the traitor, were seated conspicuously on a high bench in white surplices and white caps, beneath a fine tapestry of Leonardo's Last Supper. The reputed Vicar of the true Lord and Master now entered and took his seat on the throne: from which, after a few ceremonies, he descended, and girded himself with a towel, and proceeded to the Apostolic bench, where the thirteen were expecting him. I was near

enough to see their naked feet thrust out to be kissed, and washed, and wiped (all in a rather Jesuitical, but pardonably Jesuitical, manner) by the Pope; who thus sets an example of humility *such*, I will be bold to say, as heathenism and even “undeveloped” Christianity never saw! Peter, with his enormous white beard (which he might have borrowed from out of Bernini’s flaunting statues), trembling and tottering with affected old age,—for it *was* affectation in Peter to be *very* old,—had the honour of being served first. But scarcely had the Pope kissed the foot of the fourth apostle before the whole assembly was in great commotion. I was mounted somewhat aloft, where I had a good view of the spectacle: and upon turning to see what was the matter, I beheld the whole multitude doing their utmost to run away, and leave the other nine apostles with the Pope. Ladies were jumping down from the benches, or skipping over them, or making signals to their friends to come and rescue them with all speed; and single gentlemen, with their hats in the air, were rushing to the doors as if the place were on fire. I thought it prudent to commit my-

self to the stream, and was borne by it, with scarcely a will of my own, down the nave, through the south door, along the south colonnade, up the broad flight of steps that mount to the Vatican, and deposited on a staircase to the right, where the crowd had been greatly weeded by the vigorous Swiss guard, who rejected all, at the foot of the ascent, who wore suspicious waistcoats, brass buttons, and variegated cravats. Having drawn a deep breath and ascertained that my ribs were sound, I entered the frescoed chambers of the Palace. But all the approaches to the Pauline chapel were choked with expectants. In a short time, however, some began to return, giving up their hopes in despair. Their retreat made much disturbance in the equilibrium of the crowd; and by putting the right shoulder to the work, and watching for opportunities, and advancing by inches, I found myself, in half-an-hour, fairly within the chapel, and within reach of a barrier that afforded an elevated seat. It was in order to be in time to secure a similar position, that a rush had been made from St. Peter's before the ceremonies were half com-

pleted. For immediately after the feet-washing in the cathedral comes the Supper in the Vatican; at which the Pope lays aside his towel for a napkin, and becomes servant of servants to the thirteen. It is difficult, and therefore an object of great endeavour, to see *both* sights. Many *men* fail; but a vast number of the fair sex succeed. From my elevated position I had a good view of the Apostolic table, richly laden with vessels of gold. But of flesh-viands there were none. The whole feast consisted of fish and vegetables. A huge dish of artichokes was conspicuous, and there was salad enough for a regiment. In a short time the duly-washed thirteen made their appearance: Peter tottered to his seat (I now thought from real old age) between two supporters, and the rest followed with more alacrity. Then came the mitre-less Pope, the picture of official meekness, and acted the waiter with dignified resignation. It looked like a self-imposed penance, which he felt a certain satisfaction in fulfilling. He walked round and round the table, serving them exactly like the Premier Garçon at a table-d' hôte. After they had been eating

(which they did in earnest) for perhaps half-an-hour, the Supper was said to be ended. Thanks were returned, and the Pope withdrew, walking down the chapel very slowly with uncovered lowliness, and bestowing his benediction all the way. He had no sooner disappeared behind the crimson curtain than the make-believe apostles fell-to again, and, though I staid considerably later, I still left them eating! Any uncharitable construction that might be put upon their appetites was checked by the cooler reflection, that they were only eating salad.

If you think that scenes of this kind should be accounted serious and solemn, I can hardly agree with you as to the *should*. The whole thing appears to me so egregious a mistake, that I should be offended even with the solemnity that imposed upon the religious sense of the vulgar. But in fact there is no seriousness about it. If you except the decorum of official countenances and the lover-like infatuation of new converts, the rest look on, delighted and merry, as spectators at a dramatic entertainment, or at the game of acting charades.

I chose to spend Good Friday in my own



way, remote from the ceremonies of the Vatican, with which I was unable to associate any religious worship. Otherwise I have no prejudice against places, and can as readily offer up my devotions in St. Peter's as in St. Paul's. When surrounded by images, whose worship, in any sense, would to me, at least, be idolatry, I rest securely upon the sentence of the Apostle, "We know that an idol is nothing in the world," and continue my supplications undisturbed. It were to give a strange importance and reality to graven images, to hold that no Protestant could pray under the same roof with them. To me they are a moral nullity—logs of wood and blocks of marble, that affect my spiritual condition no more than the benches and the chairs. I have often made use of portions of the Church of England service in foreign cathedrals; and for myself, without suggesting any rule for others, I have preferred this mode of abnormal worship in a strange land to joining in the prayers of Protestant sects. With regard to mere preaching, I allow myself a larger liberty.

Upon getting some refreshment in the after-

noon at a Trattoria, I noticed a more rigid observance of pseudo-fasting than I have elsewhere seen. The usual repast consisted of macaroni soup, fish, and oranges. It is true that a little meat was smuggled into the soup; but most of the Italians separated and left it. A few of them, however, called for cutlets and steaks as usual. All took wine; which never seems to be avoided on fasting days. Even the Vatican apostles were furnished abundantly with wine, though the Pope would not allow them even eggs to their salad.

The question of *constrained* fasting is one which may well be reconsidered whenever any branch of the Western Church shall find itself in circumstances to reconstruct and modify its code of discipline. At present the theory and the practice are in glaring inconsistency: and I must be allowed to say I think the inconsistency has been real, if *not* glaring, ever since the theory was adopted. It will one day have to be considered whether a theory should not be laid aside or materially modified, which for a long series of centuries has produced little more than subterfuges and hypocrisy—a theory which treads so closely on

the anti-christian heresy of "*commanding to abstain from meats.*" Of voluntary fasting there is no question,—any farther than the propriety of it may be affected by difference of climate and condition. If there be any truth in Liebig's doctrine, that the larger portion of our food is wanted to supply animal heat, so that the abstinence which prevents fevers in the south would drive the inhabitants of the north into premature consumptions, here is a sufficient reason why the rule of Syrian anchorites should not be the rule of the Western Churches: here is a sufficient explanation of the fact, that a Greek, who lives cheerfully on two ounces of bread and twelve olives a-day, will fast *bonâ fide*, while a Roman eats fish by the pound, and *calls* it fasting. I once sat next to a gentleman at a table-d' hôte in the north of Italy, who made himself conspicuous on a fast-day by rejecting the potage as polluted by meat gravy, and required that pea-soup should be brought expressly for himself. After which he *fasted* on three poached eggs, five small fishes, two plates of vegetables, one of jelly, cakes, and a whole bottle of wine! Should such a man be allowed by the Church

to think fasting meritorious? In Austria I was frankly told, "It looks well upon paper, but no one really fasts:" they substitute one dish for another—the more expensive for the cheaper. In Italy the regulations of the Church are attended to much more religiously, especially by the higher classes. Many of them eat no meat on Friday or Saturday, and decline invitations on those days. With these it is a law of honour, as it has usually been the only law of *safety*, to respect the Church. The lower classes, however, respect in this matter their superiors: and if they take servants' places in Protestant families, they account it a grievance to be deprived of meat on Fridays.

There is one serious consideration to be borne in mind in estimating the desirableness of long compulsory fasts. It is that they have always been accompanied with ample compensations. The Carnival and Lent must be taken together: one is the complement of the other. The same Church that enjoins the mortification sanctions the revelry. It is true that, in practice, English churchmen do not in general make much account of the forty

days' fast: but then, on the other hand, they do not prepare for it by two or three months of extravagant dissipation. I could not but admire the simplicity,—if indeed it were not irony in the mask of innocence,—with which an Austrian bishop, whose pastoral address I read in a Viennese paper, publicly and, I thought, superfluously *thanked* his flock for the zeal with which they had entered into the festivities of the Carnival, and then quietly concluded by *trusting* that they would pay equal deference to the Lenten regulations of the Church. In fact, when long fasts have been enforced, human nature has always indemnified itself: and the question is whether it is better habitually to practise Christian moderation and sobriety, or to distribute one's life between ascetism and revelry. A simple ascetic Lent has, perhaps, never been honestly carried out by any Western nation: but a compound Carnival-Lent, which is the Romish, has all the elements of popularity. It satisfies the flesh and yet soothes the conscience. The season of gaiety is delightful: it whirls on so rapidly and yet lasts so long, that every one has time to be tired, and sigh for

repose. Towards the close of the last Carnival (1851) I heard several Roman Catholics in Vienna express exactly these sentiments. After nearly three months of dissipation the gentlemen complained that their purses were empty, and the ladies that they were tired of the round of gaieties, and sighed for the quietude of the spring Fast.

If Anglicans think that the English people will be induced to accept a Romish Lent without a Romish Carnival, they are attempting to impose upon them a yoke, which the so-called Catholic Church has never borne, or would bear. Its practical system is an interchange of fasts and feasts in their full physical significance; and men, or at least women, *dance* to the Lenten Confessional through the Champs Elysées of the Carnival.

There are many persons who, on purely religious grounds, prefer the temperate zone of moderation to these violent changes of the thermometer.

## LETTER XII.

Rome.

DEAR S—,

Last evening I was present at the high service of the Armenian Church, celebrated, I believe, in honour of their Bishop or Patriarch who is now in Rome. This branch of the Eastern Church acknowledges, in Italy at least, the authority of the Pope, but retains, by special favour or compact, its ancient usages. Its priests are married, and all its ceremonies Eastern, not Roman. It holds out to certain Anglicans an encouraging example of the large indulgence and consideration for English usages, which our bishops might expect, if they would but return to Rome. I have no doubt Pio Nono would let them retain their wives, their dress-coats, and even good old "Sternhold and Hopkins."

The Romans had lent their Armenian brethren the church of St. Andrew-in-Valle for the occasion. When we entered we found the congregation rapidly forming in front of a temporary screen, that partly filled up the entrance to the chancel. Two poles, with a cross-beam, constituted the framework, from which hung two handsome damask curtains, concealing the high altar behind them. It bore a curious resemblance to the preparation for private theatricals. The audience were for the most part Roman Catholics, with a certain sprinkling of Greeks. Behind the curtains (for from my position I could see somewhat behind them) they were busily preparing for the show, and palpably *rehearsing*. Each man was adapting himself to his place and part, while a boy lighted up the army of candles upon the altar. The service began by a priest gliding between the curtains in a bright pink satin robe with a tippet of saffron. He stood before a small lectern, and intoned in a lamentable voice; which was soon responded to by others behind the curtain. After this had continued some time, the damask curtains slowly sundered at a given signal, and revealed to



the curious and much amused congregation as fantastic a sight as I have ever witnessed. Picture to yourself a golden pheasant at an alabastic trough in the focus of a semicircle of birds of Paradise, who look on and chirp from time to time (if they can chirp), while he gravely dips his head every now and then to the alabaster;—and, in point of bright hues and variegated arrangement, you will not witness anything so gay and brilliant, as delighted the sparkling eyes of the spectators. There stood the golden Bishop before the altar, displaying his back-plumage to the people; and there knelt around him at a respectful distance some sixteen priests in splendid silk or satin robes of pink, yellow, vermillion, and bright green,—all so artistically arranged, as to produce the most striking and dazzling effect. The ladies smiled delight, and the young people chuckled. Then there were two Priests, on each side of the Bishop, holding metal disks or cymbals on the top of a staff, which they shook in a rapid and peculiar manner, so as to give the disks a silvery ringing sound and the appearance of *spinning*. This was too much for some Roman Catholic

lads in my neighbourhood, who could not restrain their merriment: every juvenile face, that strove to be grave, was yet shortened and broadened. The service I do not pretend to explain, as I did not understand a word of it. But nothing which I have seen in Romish worship comes within many degrees of its whimsical gaiety. At certain periods the curtains closed, as at a theatre, to signify that one act was over; and expanded again, when the preparations were completed for the second. A friend who was present informed me, that at Christmas the proceedings were yet more extraordinary. Amongst other things an unclad babe was produced on the stage to personate the infant Saviour!

Perhaps you will accuse me of partiality if I say, that I more readily made allowances for this fantastic worship than for the solemn gorgeousness of Romanism. It was indeed a great mistake to expose such a service to a western audience, whom it kept throughout in a state of merry excitement. But, for aught I knew, it might be adapted to the lively imaginations of the east, which delight in pictorial teaching. The same actions which,

in the colder and more logical north, would be thought appropriate to a mountebank, have sat upon seers and sages with oriental grace, and increased their reputation and influence among the people. *That* may be but the natural expression of joy at the equator, which would be a rhapsody of madness at the poles.

But reflections of this kind, however they may account for and excuse an exuberance of *acting* in Christian worship, do not recommend it. The simple fact remains, that the great Master and His Apostles, though orientals, did not introduce splendid spectacles, nor depend for *their* influence upon brilliant robes of pink, and saffron, and green. The spontaneous feeling, that such a suggestion can hardly be made without approaching to irreverence, is a clear *non placet* upon the practice; nor, when St. Peter taught the weaker sex, that their true ornament should not be "the wearing of gold and putting on of apparel," can we conceive, that he meant to reserve this glittering gear for future Priests and Bishops.

At nine o'clock on Easter Day high mass was celebrated by the Pope at St. Peter's: but having obtained last Sunday the inform-

ation that I desired, I was otherwise engaged. I understood, however, that the service was grand; the Pope officiating in person between the Patriarch of Jerusalem on one hand, and the Bishop of the Greek Church on the other, to signify the union of the three churches. But in the middle of the day, happening to be in the Piazza of St. Peter's, I found myself just in time to see the Pope carried up the Vatican staircase in his golden chair, preceded by the golden cross, and attended by two enormous fans that, expanding on either side, pointed him out in the distance to the people. He was lost for a while among the winding passages that led to the front of St. Peter's, but at last he emerged in stately pomp on the balcony over the principal entrance. I was near enough now to observe his motions, and within earshot of his blessing. While the book was held before him between the two peacock's-tail fans, he *chanted* manfully the appointed form of words, in a voice that was strained to its utmost power, and heard, I suppose, by tens of thousands that filled the Place. Towards the conclusion he folded his hands and looked up to heaven with the expression

of one who was earnestly imploring a blessing, and then stretched his arms across the multitude, as one who would distribute it to them. They knelt or inclined to receive it as far as eye could reach. The benevolent old man did his part feelingly and well, and the effect was solemn and imposing,—nay it was more, it was touching and sublime! It was the first Bishop of Christendom bestowing his benediction upon the Christian world! And I did not reject it, because I was a Protestant. We can have no quarrel with the Pope, if he usurps nothing more than the privilege to bless.

In the evening St. Peter's was illuminated with a display of art and magnificence to be found, they say, only in Rome. In the deepening of twilight a beading of small lamps traced out externally all the architecture of the temple,—running up the flutings of the columns,—hanging in the Corinthian acanthus-leaves,—delineating the windows,—spanning the dome with lines of longitude,—climbing up the small pillars of the lantern,—and studding the stem and spars of the cross. This, from its feebler light, is called the Silver Illumination. But a thousand unseen hands are pre-

paring the "Golden," which waits till the sun has dipped farther below the horizon. The arrangements are so perfect, that with the first stroke of eight the whole Basilica from the steps to the cross flashes out into instantaneous flame; which, before the clock has done striking, has run all round the colonnades and lighted up the broad Piazza with a circle of fire. From this spot indeed the distinct centres of light could be distinguished; but when we retired to the distance of the Pincian Hill, we saw nothing before us but a perfect cathedral of flame!

Relics were to-day exhibited at most of the churches. I saw many held up without distinguishing them to any purpose: but some of my friends were privileged to inspect—*three* thorns of the Redeemer's crown—the front of his shirt—a portion of the Virgin Mary's shift—and similar remembrances of others! What Mr. Newman once said—truly or untruly—of the writings of the Reformers, that they needed only to be more known to be less esteemed, may with justice be affirmed of many Roman relics. At the entrance of the Colosseum I observed two priests devoutly

kissing a small cross in the wall, which invites osculation with this inscription, "Whosoever kisses this cross shall receive an indulgence for a year and 40 days." If 400 days of indulgence can be obtained so easily, it is idle to ask what the Romish system of discipline is in books that say nothing of indulgences. However grievously they threaten Purgatory, the penalties can be kissed away at a hundred altars. For the above inscription is quite moderate to some that I have read; and privileged altars seem to out-bid each other in the extravagance of their promises. Perhaps they have overshot the mark, and their wares are sinking in credit from their extreme cheapness. They throw suspicion upon Purgatory itself: for if its pains can be remitted by the year for a kiss, or at most for a Litany, many persons will be apt to think, that the pains themselves must be very trifling: for it is impossible to most minds to believe that any serious punishment can be remitted upon such terms. And in fact it is *not* believed. The way in which some privileged altars stand vacant without a worshipper, indicates sufficiently the small degree of faith that is placed in these magnificent promises.

The Priests are well aware of the mischief that would arise from taking these indulgences in their plain unconditional meaning; and therefore, in modern times, they have *happily* fenced them in with conditions (of which however the original grant, unless modern, said nothing) which for all practical purposes reduce them to a nullity. Take an example.

The Pope upon the return of Holy Monday has just placarded the walls of St. Peter's with the following indulgence, granted originally by his namesake, and in 1851 re-issued by himself.

“Pius the Second, of sacred memory, granted in the year 1462, in perpetuity, a *plenary indulgence for the remission of all sins* to the faithful of both sexes, who on Holy Monday of each year shall visit the Chapel of St. Andrew the Apostle beyond the gate del Popolo near the Ponte Molle, and shall five times adore our Lord Jesus Christ with invocation of the glorious Apostle St. Andrew for the common salvation of the faithful: as appears from the inscription graven upon the monument there erected by the same Pontiff; where was deposited the sacred head of the Saint, when it was brought to Rome from the Peloponnesus.”



If these words mean anything, they ensure the "forgiveness of all sins" with great presumption upon very unsatisfactory terms; but if (as the modern Romans usually explain away a Pope's promises) they are applicable only to those who are so "faithful" as already to possess "the remission of all sins" on better grounds, without going to the Chapel beyond the gate del Popolo near the Ponte Molle; then this indulgence is an empty bubble, which is no sooner touched than it bursts into nothingness.

It must be confessed that these indulgences are an eyesore wherever one turns; and I suspect that many a new convert has found them such upon his first visit to Rome. To a stranger it would appear, that the one great moving principle of the Gospel was Indulgence. It is paraded at every popular church, and sometimes on three or four altars in the same church; it is engraven on pillars, and inlaid in walls; it stares you in the face among ancient ruins, and stands conspicuous at the corners of the streets. The stone cries out of the wall and the beam out of the timber answers it—INDULGENCE, INDULGENCE, INDUL-

GENCE! It absorbs all other inducements. For any other motive that is presented *once* to excite the faithful to adoration and works of piety, indulgences are offered them in barter full forty times. Kiss the cross for Indulgences! kneel at a privileged altar for Indulgences! say so many *aves* for Indulgences! recite the Virgin's Litany for Indulgences! let masses be performed for Indulgences! and so on, without pause or moderation. The practical worship of Rome is made to rest almost wholly upon Indulgences. And when they ask the Lutherans, Where was their religion before Luther was born? we may ask in turn, Where was the worship of Rome before Indulgences were granted? It must have been something quite different from what it now is.

## LETTER XIII.

Rome, April 1851.

DEAR S—,

I will give you one church-scene more, and then conclude that you have had specimens enough of Romish worship. I was present one morning at the Trinità di Monti, that stands on the top of the fine staircase of 135 steps, which rises from the Piazza di Spagna. The nuns of an adjoining convent bring their pupils thither to worship. They are drilled to the highest state of conventual discipline, and make a beautiful show upon parade. They are railed off from the promiscuous congregation by an iron screen-work, and have their place immediately before the altar. First come six young girls in spotless *white*, with *white* veils bound upon their heads by a chaplet of *white* roses. They stand before the altar, and bow and curtesy with the most demure de-

liberation. They rise again as by slow clock-work to the full height of their shoulders,—their heads still drooping forward, and their eyes just permitted to look at the ground through their Carlo-Dolcean eyelids. Their steps are measured and immoderately slow, as if they paused to calculate the consequence of every *pas* before it was irrecoverably taken. But at last they have completed the evolution, which sunders them, each from each, to different sides before the altar, and brings them together again in a parallel position on the other side of a bench, at which they devoutly kneel. Before them burn six wandlike candles in white candlesticks, and ornamented with white ribbons. Meanwhile their more secular sisters appear, two and two, in the offing. They are clad in sky-blue dresses (supposed to be peculiarly grateful to the Virgin) with a sash of still lighter blue hung Diana-wise across the right shoulder, and wanting nothing but the quiver to complete the illusion. But their constrained springless step is not that of the bow-bearing Artemis: the Graces whom they imitate are Silence, Patience, and Modesty. With extraordinary slowness and pre-

cision of movement the first maiden-couple advances into position before the altar; to which they bow gracefully together, and rising by deliberate inches separate, right and left, each to her appropriate place beside the six *white-roses*. Four-and-twenty sisters elaborate the same routine, and the whole school is wound up like a Geneva watch, and keeps time as accurately—for an hour. I must say, that if some high dames in the Sistine Chapel scandalized one's motions of propriety by the velocity of their vespers, they did not learn this ill habit from the nuns of La Trinità. It was plainly a great point of conventual discipline to train the young ladies to go through the divine ceremonies at the slowest rate consistent with progression. When all was over, they retired with the same perfection of ceremonial parade. The sky-blue sisters paired from either side before the altar, bent exactly together to the same parallel of obeisance, then rose with their white veils as slowly as the light cloud that floats up the mountain-side, and as slowly veered off beyond the horizon. Last of all, the white-roses reversed their evolution about the candlesticks, bowed in a row before the

altar, and then departed with downcast eyes,—silently, musingly, and lingeringly. What they thought, is known only to One: what they did, was the pride of the nunnery!

Romanism is a religion of strong contrasts. If on some its obligations sit very lightly,—if in many cases all vital religion seems to be lost in a series of ceremonial make-believes,—yet many who enter conscientiously into its spirit, evince a degree of personal self-denial and patient continuance in well-doing, from which any church in the world might take example. Our own countrymen,—the great inventors and patrons of the comfortable,—are too much disposed to cultivate a comfortable religion; to choose comfortable places of worship, and comfortable seats, and comfortable cushions to kneel upon; even to estimate doctrine chiefly by its tendency to promote “comfort;” and in short, in spiritual no less than in temporal things, to have every thing comfortable about them. This national tendency—it cannot be doubted—puts them to some disadvantage in presence of a religion which is not self-indulgent, and of a Master who preclaims, “Except a man deny himself

and take up his cross daily, he cannot be my disciple." The contrast, as far as appears upon the surface, is striking in Italy. Well-dressed ladies kneel side by side with the poor on the same hard benches or the same marble pavement. The want of comfortable accommodation, which perhaps in England would be thought sufficient reason for forsaking the church, is not felt here. On the same stone steps I have seen beggars and fine ladies at the footstool of Him who is no respecter of persons. And in many points, as compared with ourselves, I should be inclined to yield to the Romans the palm of humility and self-denial.

On Easter Monday we had a grand display of fireworks. The tower of St. Angelo is the usual site of operations; but the French, having replenished that fortress with gunpowder, held the makers of squibs to be as dangerous as Red republicans. They removed therefore their "explosibles" to the Pincian Hill, which looks down abruptly on the Piazza del Popolo. Though the French soldiers and every disposable man in Rome were in the Piazza, there was room enough for at least half as

many more. The exhibition was on the grandest scale; the explosions stunning; the castles in the air brilliant and fantastic; rockets, wheels, serpents, crackers, and I know not what, promoted the general uproar: cascades of fire tumbled down the precipice in dazzling torrents;—and then all went out in smoke and darkness! No fireworks will compensate for the melancholy gloom that follows them. The blaze is for a moment: the melancholy we carry home with us. It is so like the light of joy that goes out in darkness,—the bubble-bursting of the “vanity of vanities,”—the tale full of sound and fury, signifying nothing!

We drove out on Easter Tuesday to the English Burial-ground, where Keats and Shelley lie beneath the shadow of the pyramid of Caius Cestius. It is a fine place for tombs, in a land where all that was once great upon earth lies buried. It is impossible to wander among the fragments of temples, and palaces, and aqueducts, and tombs, without forming a very different conception of the ancient Romans from that which we brought with us: without feeling little in our own eyes: without becoming sensible that the moderns, with their ever-



marching intellect and vaunted superiority, are not precisely the great men we had taken them for. With all the increased appliances of modern times, and with the additional experience and practice of centuries, our great cities will now and then produce a work that will stand comparison with Roman greatness; and, in some three or four cases, they have accomplished an undertaking that has exceeded any single work of antiquity. But it is the immense *number* of gigantic works in the Roman Empire that overpowers the imagination; it is the profusion of grandeur in the wrecks of Rome that leave modern cities behind it. Where are our Colosseums? our Golden Palaces of Nero? our Baths of Dioclesian and of Caracalla? our temples, and triumphal arches, built to withstand all onset for 2000 years? our domes supported on colossal pillars of granite (three score feet high and sixteen in circumference) cut out of the mountains in single blocks, and set up where they shall never be cast down except by the convulsions of an earthquake? I do not ask where one or other of such works is to be found; but where are they crowded together

as within the walls of ancient Rome? Turn where you will, it is but a variety of the same scene. From the broken columns, that have lain in the streets for ages, to the towering arches of aqueducts, or the craggy shoulders of buried palaces that peer above the soil, the whole land is strown with memorials of unparalleled might and magnificence. When you take into account the means at their disposal, and compare them with our steam-engines and machinery, you will not be disposed to speak vaingloriously of "the indomitable energy of Britons." Since I have been in Italy I have felt a profounder admiration of the greatness of the ancient Romans, than I ever felt for that of any other nation. The ruins of the mighty works around one bear witness, that Rome was worthy to be the city of the conquerors of the world.

From the pyramid of Cestius we passed on to the yet unfinished basilica of St. Paul's. It is more than four hundred feet long, with four rows of Corinthian columns up the nave, separating off its four aisles. It ranks next to St. Peter's in size, and will, when finished, scarcely yield in architectural beauty to any

basilica in Rome. The work is going on vigorously, in spite of evil times, and some of the Mosaic portraits of the Popes (of which there is to be a complete series from the beginning) are already mounted. It is constructed on a scale of large liberality, greatly aided by the contributions of foreign sovereigns: no expense is spared that is necessary to its perfection; and it will doubtless be a church of prime magnificence, such as is possessed by few cities of Christendom. But one's practical English nature will sometimes break out even at Rome, and prosaically demand, *cui bono?* When there are already in the city about two hundred churches more than are required, or than can find a due supply of either priests or worshippers, and when the pecuniary embarrassments of Rome (to say nothing of its coadjutors Austria and Spain) are such as demand every *paul* for fiscal necessities, is it desirable to sink the revenues of a province in rebuilding a superb basilica, in a wilderness beyond the walls, where there are no inhabitants, and where the very priests that serve at the altar must make haste to escape from the life-blighting breath of the

malaria? The answer is, that it is the traditional burial-place of St. Paul: and, therefore, while the most pressing public works stand suspended by the revolution, this must go on to the honour of the great Apostle. A vast vacant church may be a splendid cenotaph, and more tasteful than the pyramid that lies heavily on Caius Cestius: but even in this point of view, and allowing the credibility of the tradition, to many a Christian pilgrim the sublime ruins of the ancient basilica would have seemed a worthier sepulchre and a better memorial of the past, than the modern mosaics of all the Popes.

Upon returning to the city I would lead you once, in imagination, to the top of the Capitol, where it stands on the frontier of two worlds, the Present and the Past—the Christian and the Heathen. On one side lie the ruins of the great city; on the other, interspersed indeed with fragments of old time, the churches and palaces of the Papal metropolis. Just at one's *feet* is the ancient Forum, surrounded by its girdle of temples, now partly modified into Christian churches, and partly standing in detached columns and

broken entablatures, the survivors of their own names. Beyond it lie the grass mounds that have gathered over the buried city, or the vineyards that have covered them; and in the midst—the triumphal arches of Titus and Constantine, the grand Colosseum, and the ruins of the imperial Baths and Palaces. In the distance the Sabine and the Latian hills close in the prospect, sweeping round from Albano, Frascati, Tivoli, to the far-famed mount Soracte.

I only indicate the position, but do not pretend to describe what has been described a hundred times. But I have said, that the ruins have survived their own names. For in the neighbourhood of the Forum there is scarcely one ancient monument, whose traditional designation is not disputed by the antiquarians. Jupiter Tonans gives up his three pillars to Vespasian, and Vespasian, after a short tenure, resigns them to Saturn, and is accommodated with eight granite columns instead, which the antiquaries have taken from Fortune. The temple of the *Parcæ* becomes the temple of Hadrian. Unlucky Jupiter has been obliged to resign

three more beautiful columns to Minerva; Romulus and Vesta contend for the same site; and the time-honoured temple of Remus is now assigned to the commonplace Penates. The temple of Peace is, after all, the basilica of the pugnacious Maxentius. The result of these permutations is, that all one's early associations (the only associations that wake poetry and enthusiasm) are scattered to the winds: and none but a man of easy credulity, or of antiquarian positiveness, can believe in anything. After a long study of the rival evidence he might come to some probable conclusion; but the unpretentious pilgrim, who is yet sufficiently acquainted with literary disputes not to accept the last *say* merely because it is the last, finds his faith shaken in all traditionary names. While the clerks dispute, the laity grow sceptical; till at last, in presence of half the monuments of ancient Rome, we can feel sure of nothing, but that they are very old, and possibly what the latest, or some one, of the antiquarians has called them.

I have the greatest objection to be cheated in my sentiments; I would rather be cheated

*moderately* in my purse. I cannot commit myself to an elevating enthusiasm in the temple of Honour and Virtue, while the gentleman yonder in spectacles is waiting to prove to me, by book, that it is in fact the temple of Bacchus. One is reduced, therefore, to generalize over the ruins of Rome, and to lose thereby the interest of special associations: always excepting a few undisputed objects—the Baths, the triumphal arches, the Pantheon, and, above all, the Colosseum.

You will blame me, perhaps, if I tell you the reflection that first came to me spontaneously, after looking, this way and that, upon buried heathenism on one side, and living Christianity on the other. It was—I give it in the bluff form in which it presented itself—Wherein has Rome profited by the change? Wherein are the Christianized Italians superior to their Pagan progenitors? Was the city which produced the stern virtues of the older republicans; which was adorned by the Scipios, by Cicero, and Cæsar; which was ruled over by the Antonines and Trajan, inferior to its Christian successor, whose annals are filled with crimes, whose

palaces reek with assassinations and despicable vice? Did the city gain by exchanging the Cæsars for the Borgias, and the heathen Lucrece for her Christian namesake? Take a definite period: after 700 years of heathenism and 700 years of Papal rule, whose history reads the purest? which people are the most noble?

Thoughts of this kind are common, and suggest themselves, without being fully avowed, to most pilgrims who visit the Eternal City. But they involve a fallacy and injustice. We select the bright spots of heathenism and compare them with the stains on Christianity: or, at best, we deal with historical personages, who form a very small portion of any people, and overlook the condition of the millions. And it is precisely among the millions that Christianity is most effective; while those who make a noise in the world, and fill the pages of history, are often least under its influence. The proud virtues of the Romans are open to exception; the very fame which they acquired renders them suspicious: while the private and unobtrusive virtues which Christianity fosters are excluded from re-



noun by their own humility. Then, again, we apply a very different standard of excellence, by which to estimate a pagan sage or hero, and an avowed Christian: so much so, that certain crimes and vices in a Roman Pontiff, that fill us with just indignation, would scarcely have been observed in a Roman Emperor. But there is one test which will reveal the real difference between heathen and Christian Rome, in spite of the hero-worship, which is so alluring, and of the Papal corruptions which have been so flagrant. It is an inquiry into the public institutions of mercy and disinterested benevolence in the two cities. Christian Rome is full of foundations of charity for the poor, the sick, the widow, and the orphan; but in the ruins of ancient Rome I know not where to look for memorials of similar institutions. Heathenism taught men to think of their own glory, but inspired not the love of God or man: Christianity—even such as it appears in Rome—has filled the city with works of mercy, and trained men to brotherly kindness and charity.

## LETTER XIV.

Rome.

DEAR S—,

A visit to the Pope's private palace, on Monte Cavallo, did not yield much more than a sight of some first-rate Gobelin tapestry,—of chambers appropriately, not gaudily, furnished,—of the modest table at which the Pope dines in solitude,—of the many-mat-trassed, undraperied, iron bedstead on which he sleeps,—and of the *billiard-room* where he digests with a few Cardinals a temperate dinner and the vexations of evil times. We crossed over the way to the palace of the Rospigliosi, where GUIDO's enchanting fresco the "Aurora" is worth, as a sight, the whole of the Palazzo Pontificio.

Among the not least interesting objects of examination must be mentioned the artists' studios, which they show with much readiness

and courtesy. Our own country is well represented, especially in sculpture: and it is not a little amusing (in verification of Mr. Dickens' suggestion) to identify in the various *genre* pictures of the Ateliers the attitudinizing figures of ragged boys and black-eyed brunettes, and real or mock brigands, who bask in the sun on the hill-side of staircase that mounts to La Trinità. It is just the lazy life that suits Italian predilections. They lie about in various attitudes half the day, waiting for some artist to hire them; and are paid the other half for being looked at. They hang in picturesque groups on the stairs, and the boys and girls are exceedingly beautiful. Many foreigners, at least, who have learned to appreciate this stronger style of beauty, profess to hold cheap, in comparison, the pale faces of the north.

Nor should the workmanship in cameos and mosaics be despised. The latter, at least, are the pride of Italy and Rome, and have been so from remote antiquity. The identical mosaic doves which Pliny admired in his day are still (so they tell you) among the most interesting ornaments of the Capital, and fur-

nish the type to a thousand imitations. The older churches are rich in this species of art; and in more than one concave apse the "Good Shepherd" appears in the centre in august proportions, and his twelve gigantic sheep fill up the semicircle round him.

Upon taking the last turn of sight-seeing in Rome I copied an inscription, that has often arrested my eye, from the walls of a street in the neighbourhood of St. Peter-in-vinculo. I give it in Italian and English:

Antonio il santo, O passeggiere, adora,  
Che fu sì di miracoli secondo,  
Mentre visse non sol, ma morto ancora,  
Che stupir fece la natura e 'l mondo.  
Però con viva fede a lui t' affida,  
Che perir non puo mai chi in lui confida.

Saint Antony, O wayfarer, adore!  
Who so in miracles abounded,  
Not living only, but when life was o'er,  
That he held Nature and the world astounded.  
Therefore a living faith towards him cherish,  
For he who trusts in him can never perish!

This speaks for itself to those who have read in the Scripture of Jesus of Nazareth, "There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be

saved." Nay, replies the dead wall, there is the name of St. Antony!

Among the numerous miracles by which this saint "astounded" the world after death, there is one which he cannot perform. He cannot—I know by experience—drive away the troop of juvenile pickpockets that gather round the "wayfarer," who stops, with note-book in hand, to copy the inscription. In despair of the assistance of St. Antony, and before I had reached the sixth line, I myself turned about and drove them away three several times! Alas, for the youth of Rome! as all my departed *silks* can bear witness!

Quid intactum nefasti  
Liquimus? Unde manus juvenus  
Metu deorum continuit?

Upon leaving the Papal Capital it is hardly in my power to describe the general impression it has left on me with regard to the Romish worship. It is so easy to be one-sided, so difficult to be fair. There is so much that is objectionable, so much that is admirable: such strange contrasts; such palpable inconsistencies; such reverence and such superstition: so much habitual religion and

self-denial with so much mechanical formality, that while it would be easy to take either side exclusively, and to fill pages with the good or the bad features of practical Romanism, it would require a much more intimate acquaintance with the Italians than I possess to combine them in their just proportions, so as not to produce a caricature. On the whole, I am happy to leave the place with a better impression of the religious character both of priests and people, than I came prepared to expect. I do not at all believe, from anything I see or hear, that the former are the unworthy class of persons they are often assumed to be. Where they are so numerous there are, undoubtedly, some delinquents: but the vast majority are men of respectable moral character, and very many, in the discharge of the duties which they have undertaken, would be exemplary to any priesthood. The external demeanour of those who are training for Holy Orders is in the highest degree praiseworthy and becoming.

Among the people, in spite of some strange inconsistencies, it is impossible not to recognize the strong religious element which appears in

their character. Day after day, in the districts of the poorer population, the church steps are besieged by men and women of all ages, waiting for the opening of the doors, that they may offer their morning and evening prayers in the house of God. I have seen them sitting on the steps for twenty minutes or more, spending their time in reading their prayer-books preparatory to more direct worship. When admitted into the church they kneel apart in the most unobtrusive manner, and seem wholly intent on their devotions: differing in this respect (as the devout poor always differ advantageously from more fashionable worshippers) from those who attend mass *pro forma*, and to set a good example to their dependents. I have continually seen poor men choose out some quiet spot, where they seemed to be little in the way of observation, and covering their faces with their hands, remain long in mental prayer, and then rise and quit the place without regarding any one, as if they were wholly wrapped up in their own meditations: and sometimes the tears have stolen down their cheeks from the depth of their emotion. In no country that

I have visited have I seen a people so given to prayer, and so unostentatious and apparently in earnest in their worship.

One curious evidence of the religious tone prevalent among the people may be mentioned, though in itself it is sufficiently trivial. Put a piece of chalk into the hands of a *gamin*, and in an hour's time he will delineate on the walls, in undisguised features, the moral character of his class. From scribbles of this kind, amid such as "Death to tyrants," "Down with the French soldiers," "The republic for ever," &c., I noted down the following, the like of which I do not remember to have seen out of Italy:

Jesus Christ be praised!

Respect the Cross!

Respect the Holy Sacrament!

Religion for ever!—(very common).

To God, and to his mother the mistress of the world!

Many Saints' names with *vivas* attached to them.

In a better hand, painted in black, and probably the work of monks, one meets at every turn, in out-of-the-way places, among ruins,



and on old walls, such inscriptions as the following:

God sees me.

God will judge me.

Heaven or Hell awaits me.

All things have an end.

Eternity ends never!

Religious books also abound in the cheap stalls, and are the popular objects of purchase. Their proportion to other books is, I think, much greater than in England, France, or Germany. To this indeed the Censorship and the Inquisition may somewhat contribute. But it must be remembered that if they exclude socialistic and democratic publications, their effect upon religious works is at least as restrictive. The *Index Expurgatorius* is very even-handed; it equally fulminates against the poor man's Bible, Socialism, Freedom, and Vice. I was amused to read a notice the other day in an Italian Journal, that Archbishop Whately's *Logic* was prohibited to the faithful. Out of Italy I should have asked—wherefore? But there are many palpable reasons around me why,—next to a cheap Bible, and especially in connexion with it,—a common-sense system of

Logic should be accounted dangerous for the masses.

Among the moral virtues of the Romans must be reckoned their temperate and abstemious habits. They drink little and eat less; and the fasts which the Church imposes are far more attended to than in any other country. Their festivals also are free from excesses. On a Festa-day you will see a girl, perhaps, strike a tambourine, and her companions gather round and dance the Tarantella for a quarter of an hour, and then disperse again about the promenades, satisfied with this simple and sober ebullition of festivity. There are no tipplers on these occasions, soddening at benches, as would infallibly be the case in England; and if they *eat* anything, it is a morsel of bread, an orange, or a few nuts.

The general demeanour of the female sex is modest, self-respectful, and uncoquettish. They neither court observation, nor are forward to observe. In the presence of strangers they follow their own pursuits with unaffected simplicity: they are not vain enough to feel embarrassed. In this respect they stood high above the mark which I had been led to

expect. If the vices of some abandoned Borgia, and the intrigues of petty courts, have stained the page of Italian history, and prepared men to receive with readiness the social scandals of modern times, it must be remembered that these charges, true or false, apply to the least national part of the population—its higher classes. And we must always protest against estimating the virtue of any people by that of its “Fashionable World.” From the Tales of Boccaccio or the verses of Byron you would not form an elevated idea of the moral condition of the society to which they respectively relate: but it is a society from which the mass of the nation are excluded: and among *these* you will be struck, upon coming in from the south of Germany, by the reserve and modesty of the sex.

Since writing the above I have had a striking confirmation of the favourable opinion I had formed of the moral character of the Roman parochial clergy. I do not refer to the testimony of *unprejudiced* Englishmen now living in Rome, who express the sentiments of the upper classes when they speak of the Priests as of “men of good repute:” but my in-

formant is a German of rank, who being aware of some clerical scandals in parts of his own country, made it a special point to inquire for his own satisfaction into the reputation which the parish Priests bore in Rome. He pushed his inquiries without scruple in all directions, both in high and low life, and especially among those who are most behind the scenes and most capable of making revelations. And the result was, that *no where did he find cause of suspicion against them.* If here and there an individual was known as a bad Priest, he was recognized by all as an exception to the general rule. The belief among all classes was, that their clergy were men of pure life and blameless morals. And my friend drew the conclusion which every sensible man would draw, that they could not, as a body, have obtained among the multitude this reputation unless they had deserved it. "The life of a Priest" said an Italian to a friend of mine "should be as stainless as a glass of water." And I have reason to believe that the exceptions to this rule are not more numerous in Italy than in England.

The greatest blot upon the Italian character,

as it appears in the transactions of vulgar life, is their defective perception of the beauty of honesty and truth. Never elsewhere had we found so large a proportion of those, with whom we had dealings, ready to cheat on all occasions without compunction or shame. If unmasked in their attempts at fraud, they were no way disconcerted: it was only regarded as an enterprise that had failed, and they hoped to be more successful next time. No verbal agreement is safe, however respectable the parties may appear. Contract after contract is broken, when the time for fulfilment comes, if you have not the terms down in black and white. Articles undertaken to be made at one price are sent in at another, and the original bargain is ignored, or declared to be too unreasonable to be kept. Nor in the clearest cases of fraud is there any redress at law, unless you have a written engagement to show. The judge will decide in favour of the defrauder on the ground that one man's word is as good as another's.

Benjamin Franklin, if I remember rightly, says somewhere, that he felt disposed to give thanks to Divine Providence for the amount

of *vanity* which he possessed: he imputed to it many excellent results. Without scrutinizing his mode of expression, we may be allowed to wish, that the southern Italians had a little more of those qualities, which, in their depraved or exaggerated development, we call vanity, self-esteem, and pride; but which (like all the innate passions of our nature) have, in their proper measure and subordination, a necessary part to perform in promoting the moral progress of the race. A nation, for example, with as much *amour propre* as the French, can never, under any disadvantages, be debased below a certain mark. Where the *shame* of personal dishonour is felt, there will always be an early limit to degradation. The *bad* will be spurned, at least when it becomes *base*. And the marked defect of those qualities in the Italians, which are perhaps excessive in the French, does not appear to me to be a national virtue, nor the christian grace of humility,—though it is commended and cherished as such in convents and monasteries.

## LETTER XV.

Rome to Naples.

DEAR S—,

The character for dishonesty which I have given to some of the Italians, will only be too promptly illustrated by a hasty sketch of the chain of impositions that conducted us to Naples from Rome. Our party consisted of a German Baron, an American, and myself. Upon quitting the holy city we all three had the misfortune to be presented with a *duplicate* of our bills. My own case was speedily disposed of, and the second inventory of comestibles was explained to be "a mistake." But when we were seated in the Vettura, and the Vetturino was in the act of smacking his whip in parting triumph, the sleek waiter stepped to the carriage-door to inform the Baron, that he also had forgotten to settle his account. The worthy Baron was well acquainted with

Italian in all its dialects; and the burst of indignation with which he received this announcement, it exceeds my English to describe. The Italian only, with its *caniglias* and *uccios* and *uzzos* of contempt, sufficed to give vent to the German's scorn of Roman roguery. But in vain did he protest that he had paid his hundred francs over-night. The "Padron" maintained with impudent pertinacity that he had never seen the money;—presuming, I suppose, upon the probability that the German had lighted his cigar with the "quittance." This hope however was vain. The luggage was unpacked, and the quittance, duly signed by the Padron a few hours before, produced in black and white; upon which, and under the threat that his conduct should be exposed in Galignani, he consented to acknowledge that this was a second mistake. We now rolled down the street to take up our American friend; whom we found standing at the door of his lodgings well-nigh snorting with scorn. For he too had committed the indiscretion of paying over night; and in the morning the whole household, from the eldest to the youngest, was ushered up into his room to declare, that



no one had received the cash! I need not say, that in maintaining his just rights one American is a match for a Roman household. The gentleman of New York did not pay twice.

The small fry of *Facchinos*, or porters, (though offering characteristic traits of nationality with their pleasant demand of two francs for touching a portmanteau with two of their fingers) I will leave to scream at each other, and tear the ladies' bandboxes in pieces. But at the frontier of the kingdom of Naples we came in contact with the officers of his Neapolitan Majesty. The barrier gates were closed at our approach, but opened again at our humble request, and we were permitted to draw up for half-an-hour under the official archway, there to perform quarantine till our persons, luggage, and passports were declared to be free from revolutionary infection. Meanwhile an official, who seemed to be lounging about for the purpose, took the opportunity of informing us, that within the last three days they had sent back six carriages of travellers for the equivocal reason of not duly "satisfying" the police: he endeavoured mysteriously

to impress us with an idea of the difficulty of crossing the frontier in these troublous times. This was preparatory to a demand for three separate fees: one for touching our passport (they were careful to explain that the government charged nothing for *signing* it); another for *not* touching our luggage; and a third supplementary for the police in general, *i.e.* for those who had been at the trouble of looking on. These were all paid under the fear that otherwise our books would be confiscated as at Venice. But upon leaving this place—which we did with an official escort on the box, who took another fee for attendance—we found that the real place of examination was a few miles further on at Fondi; where, as our escort promptly informed our coachman, it would be necessary to bribe more largely if we hoped to get through. Accordingly, upon our arrival at that place our prime spokesman, the Baron, was ushered up into what, I suppose, I must call the Bribing Chamber of the Police: where some of the officials were at table playing cards, and others making bargains with the couriers of some half-dozen carriages, which were detained, like our own,

at the door. The Principal wrote out a *Permission to pass* without saying a word, handed it to the Baron, and waited to see what fee he meant to offer. A certain sum was proffered, and contemptuously rejected: it was doubled: upon which the Principal quietly took back the Permission, and said, that it would do for another party. For ourselves, our luggage must be searched; and as our horses were not Neapolitan, they would not be allowed to be taken into the country. The Baron now tripled the bribe: which was at length accepted, and we were permitted to go on our way in peace. Glad were we to escape from the mob of naked children that beset all the carriages without intermission, thrusting unsightly objects in, almost, at the windows, and outraging the feelings of female travellers (several of whom were English) by their importunity. The police meanwhile looked quietly on, intent upon nothing but taking bribes.

Abundant assurances were given us that our *Lascia Passare*, for which we had paid so handsomely, would be everywhere respected, and no farther fees would be required. At the gates of Naples however the Custom-house

officers told us, that they would respect it only upon condition of paying again: which, for the sake of our books, we were obliged to do. Just as before, a certain sum was offered, and rejected: it was doubled: when the Principal, having taken it, turned upon his heel and said, "Well, gentlemen, you have satisfied me—now you must satisfy my assistant"—turning us over to his clerk.

The sum total of these exactions is not great—but it is all highway robbery; and if with all deference we might be permitted to whisper a word into the Royal ear, it would be to ask, at what period of Neapolitan history it is expected, that the people will *begin* to respect a government that is represented to them by such officials?

But we must return a little upon our way. At the conclusion of the Holy Week at Rome it was as difficult to make a reasonable bargain with a Vetturino, as to find a sensible man on the Pilate staircase. At last however we passed through the eternal gates, and in a couple of hours mounted the heights of Albano, visited its lake, admired its lovely scenery, and put what faith we could in old stories and the tomb

of Ascanius. At Cisterna, the village of wells, we arrived in time to walk its boundaries before sunset, and to observe the strange picturesque antiquity of its huddle of houses, its ruins and cave-huts, and the variegated costume of its pretty inhabitants. The next day our road was *ruled* for us across the Pontine Marshes, in an endless parallel with the great Pontine-Level drain through an endless avenue of trees, at whose extremity a gothic portal of blue sky stood distantly before us, like the gate of heaven at the close of life's pilgrimage. Not a creature was to be seen, not a voice to be heard, through all the weary way. The braying of an ass would have been music in that silence of death. The malaria encamped there alone: and the natives had fled from it to the hills that formed our eastern horizon; where, at a level just above the reach of the noxious exhalations, their cottages were from time to time discernible.

Upon approaching TERRACINA,—the “late saxis candentibus ANXUR” of old days,—the scene changed. The bold towering rock that stands like a giant at the gates to guard the frontier town from the Neapolitans,—the fine

hill above with its caves and cliffs, and the ruins yet conspicuous upon it,—the majestic bay, of which Terracina forms the extremity, with the wide view across to the rocky island of Ischia, and to the yet remoter summit of Vesuvius,—offered large compensation for the dreariness of our morning's journey. Upon resuming our way, we soon passed the jealous frontier of Naples, and ever-to-be-forgotten FONDI; then swept under pleasant ITRI, that built her nest on high in the clefts of the rocks; venerated, as we passed, the tomb of Cicero, and the memory of the freedman who honoured his dead master; and finally congratulated ourselves at sunset in an hotel built, as they tell us, on the site of Cicero's villa, close to the sea-shore, where the tide yet plashes against the broken arches that once belonged to that omniloquent genius.

At sunrise the scene from our hotel was enchanting. An orange orchard at our feet descended to the water's edge, and filled all the air with its luscious odour. The ruins of Roman villas were on either side, breaking the swell of ocean into perpetual spray. At the distance of two or three miles along the

shore stood *Gaeta*, on the hill-slope beneath Orlando's tower, looking out brightly upon her splendid bay. Behind us was a range of verdant hills, and in front lay the broad Mediterranean unruffled to the horizon. To the far south, the insular rocks of Procida and Ischia closed in the gulph, and beyond them the conspicuous Vesuvius threw up its silvery vapour to be reddened in the rising sun. It was well that we rose betimes to enjoy this glorious prospect! for so fair a morning ushered in a day as gloomy, drizzling, and at last drenching, as ever damped the buoyancy of a traveller's spirit. At St. Agatha, with good fare at a dirty inn, we did our best to pass contentedly the two or three hours of imprisonment which the weather imposed upon us. Our hotel, for so it was called, was in fact a stable-yard, surrounded with stalls for cattle on the ground-floor, and sleeping apartments above. The latter opened upon a common gallery running in part round the yard, and sheltered under the projecting eaves. The bedrooms were scantily furnished, the beds such as would be scorned in all our model cottages; and the doors, like the shells of feverish oys-

ters, gaped a little for fresh air, and refused to be *quite* closed. And then the air which they drew in came direct from the stable! Yet many of our noble tourists were fain to sleep in these chambers with their delicately sensitive ladies, and in the morning called for the Strangers' Book, and wrote in it grateful commendations of the inn! Such good does it do to the dormant capabilities of the great to jostle a little over the stones of travail!

We entered Naples in the obscurity of evening, when nothing was to be seen but the sombre presence of its Vesuvius, and the sweeping semicircle of its frontage to the sea. Since then we have formed a tolerable acquaintance with this Queen of Bays from Sorrento at the south-east to Capo Misero at the north-west, —a distance, I believe, of about 70 miles.

But we must begin with Naples. The streets, and lanes, and bye-lanes of this Græco-Roman city present the strangest sight imaginable. They are not merely the places of traffic and of promenade, but, by turns, the cafés, the dancing saloons, the macaroni rooms, the dormitories, and, above all, the sinks and sculleries of the population! Here



a reclining group, of all ages, are huddled together in picturesque confusion, as if they were doing it on purpose to be daguerreotyped for sale: there the men are lying about on the pavement asleep, while the women are spinning flax at their side: here a fine healthy-looking sun-burnt girl of eighteen has just deposited her jet-black shock of dishevelled hair in her sister's lap, who is disentangling it, and ferreting through the brushwood with venationary zest: there the young children, three-parts naked, are tumbled in a heap like new-born pigs. A good part of the Chiaja, the sea-side promenade, is in possession of the laundresses, and a thousand dripping draperies flutter in the breeze. Then cripples and unsightly abortions, and all who have anything horribly disgusting to show, expose their deformities and montrosities to the public gaze without a rag to hide them, and strive to excite compassion by revolting the feelings—an attempt in which, in the long run, they fail. I believe it would be ultimately advantageous to these poor wretches themselves, if the police would interfere to prevent their committing these outrages upon decency and

pity. They shock the feelings a few times, and then slowly and certainly harden them: they oblige their habitual spectators to steel their hearts and shut up their sensibilities in mere self-defence. I should be much disposed to impute to this cause the tendency to *cruelty*, which I was sorry to observe among the Neapolitans. Who cares for the sufferings of an ass or mule, when he is accustomed daily to such scenes as these? Accordingly, as long as a poor beast can be made to move, he is goaded on to death with heartless cruelty. If a society for the protection of animals were established here, it would have to send half the donkeys to a veterinary hospital to be healed of their raw wounds, and half their drivers to prison. Even where there is no intended cruelty, beasts of burden in general must lead an ill life at Naples. In proportion as the natives work little, they make their cattle work much. The high two-wheeled caleche, with three persons (besides babes) in front, three (besides babes) in the middle, three standing behind, and three swung in a net below, makes a droll picture, and is an amusing mode of travelling to every one but

the horse; who often is only prevented from coming to a dead standstill by being flogged into a continuous gallop. Away they all go! the bag of boys jostling into place below, the men behind gesticulating, laughing, screaming; the women and babes delighted with the swing; the whip flying incessantly; and the raw-boned beast lungeing desperately on his way.

The beggars are all distanced by this rapid mode of sweeping through the streets—not to mention, that none of the twelve or fourteen worthies in this “one-horse chaise” have any sous or *grains*, as they call them, to spare. But in aristocratic vehicles, where two or three horses take it leisurely with twice as many pic-nic gentlemen and ladies, a motley escort of mendicants is as natural an appendage as a company of Swiss guards to royalty. Wherever you move out of the town,—to Pompeii, to Castelamare, to the villas about ancient Baia,—you have the same flesh-and-rag *cortège*. As a general rule, every man and woman that you pass on these excursions, or at least that you look at, hold out their hands for alms; and all the young children, with all the lads and lasses up to the years of mature indiscre-

tion, flock about the carriage on both sides and behind, all, as they tell you, very hungry and crying aloud for "small coin" and "macaroni." Here, at our left-hand, are two strapping wenches returning from work in the fields, steadying a faggot of brushwood on their heads with one hand, and thrusting the other into the carriage as they run beside it,—loudly proclaiming that they are dying of hunger, but laughing all the while, and showing their white teeth at their own imposture. They are followed by a more juvenile troop, who imitate their *betters*, and sing out incessantly for famine as merrily as grasshoppers. Whether they get something or nothing, they trot on with the carriage, and their cheerful vivacity is never exhausted. They know that you will descend at SOLFATARA to visit the sulphur pits, where the embers of an old-world volcano are still smouldering and smoking; and where the earth, smitten like the chest of the hectic, yields to the stethoscopic ear the cavernous sound of far-gone consumption within. They know, again, that you will draw up to view the marble floor and the broken columns of the temple of Serapis; that

you will linger about the ruins of the temples of Venus and Diana, and whisper many times to light-eared Echo beneath the ivied dome of Mercury. Then you will plunge into the dungeons of Nero, and rove among the lofty columns of the great Reservoir of Waters. Tombs and caves and ruins are all to be visited in their turn. And on each of these occasions, joined by others who are waiting for you at the spot, they will tread out all your footmarks behind you, encumber your steps in front, interrupt your conversation, and irritate to the utmost of their power your charity and your patience. If you make your body small, and creep through some narrow opening into an ancient columbarium, there are little urchins that will crawl after you, and carry on their calling in the tomb. If you leap the ruined parapet and leave the mannikins behind, there are stout tall lads who can leap farther than you, and are accustomed to beg both on the sunny and the shady side of the wall. If, importuned out of patience, you seize,—as one of our party did,—the postillion's whip, and make a flying radius round you, the whole tribe, little and big, flit

off as instantaneously as a swarm of Neapolitan flies,—and as instantaneously return: and when at last, overcome by their persevering good-humour, by their offerings of wild flowers, and by the merriness of their mendicity, you find that, in fact, you have parted with all your sous, a little sly boy will unknot his handkerchief and offer to give you change for a *carline*, and a girl, who has been “very hungry” for an hour, will show you that she has her apron full of eggs.

I am told that in winter these poor creatures are in extreme distress; that they will fly upon a morsel of bread like wild cats, and tear from each other the scraps that are given to them. Under such circumstances they acquire the habit of importuning every stranger for food, and carry it on by custom in the summer months, when they are no longer in want, but find abundance for their small needs in the natural exuberance of the soil.

## LETTER XVI.

Naples, May.

DEAR S—,

Naples itself affords comparatively few sights to one who is not now beginning his tour, but has arrived at the farther end of the Peninsula of wonders. For so very ancient a town it is singularly deficient in *obvious* antiquities, though they abound in the immediate neighbourhood. The Borbonian Museum is the great attraction, and stands unrivalled among similar institutions. Its pictures and works of modern art, though sufficient to enrich any European gallery, sink in point of interest into insignificance beside the mosaics, frescoes, statues, and all kinds of precious relics from Herculaneum and Pompeii. You seem to live again with the old Romans, and to be a witness of their every-day life. It is curious to observe how many pictures and statues look as if they were

the original germ of works that are the pride of modern times. It is difficult to say in painting and sculpture (as in poetry and all the productions of imagination) how far backward the first outlines of invention may be traced. It is not that the modern artist is a conscious plagiarist; he never perhaps saw the original to which his own work bears a filial likeness. But the forms and groupings which were shut up in Pompeii for so many centuries were already well impressed upon the public mind, as they were themselves but the expression of traditional forms existing yet earlier. And the tradition continued when the types were lost. The same germinal ideas reappear in distant ages with the variations of individual fancy.

Upon returning to my hotel somewhat late in the evening, I unexpectedly came upon a large procession, singing psalms in the silence of the night, and dazzlingly illuminated with flags of fire. For such was the appearance given by the broad and fluctuating sheets of flame that streamed in the wind from iron vessels filled with combustible materials and carried on the top of poles. For a moment I had supposed that one side of an entire



street was on fire. Upon inquiring what it meant, I was told, that they had been carrying the "good God" to a sick man, and were now taking Him back to the church! That is,—they had been carrying the Holy Sacrament to the sick man's chamber, instead of the wooden Bambino used for that purpose in Rome. This idea—which they express so crudely—of carrying the good God about in the Priest's box, seems to put the Deity very much on a par with the household idols found so abundantly at Pompeii, which a man can take away with him in the palm of his hand: and it is so offensive to one who is conscious of the greatness of his spiritual being in his longing attempts to feel after the Infinity of the Godhead, that he revolts from the transubstantiatory theory, which produces in dough these multitudinous Penates. The Romanist will meet the difficulty by telling him that they are all ONE, and that each is verily the Lord of heaven and earth! It is only in a country entirely Romish that the excrescences upon its ancient creed appear in their full deformity. In the presence of Protestantism there is always a tendency to extenuate, and

veil, and soften down the more scandalizing points: and that, I believe, not merely to make a fairer show before opponents, but because, in an atmosphere freshened with Protestant ideas, the Roman Catholic mind itself is nauseated with extravagances, which are greedily quaffed in as wholesome and invigorating in the moral malaria of Rome. It is reported, for example, that a Romish bishop in England gave out, that he would excommunicate any one of his flock who should be so superstitious as to worship the Cross itself as *per se* an object of adoration. When a fellow-countryman of ours mentioned this circumstance to an ecclesiastic at Rome, who was showing him some relics, he looked extremely surprised at this novel idea, shook his head as one who suspected heresy, and replied that such doctrine would not be borne in Rome.

A rumour being afloat, that some English vessels have been wrecked and abandoned on the African coast, a crew of Neapolitan sailors, who are capital hands and feet at diving, have thought it a fine opportunity for exercising their talents, and securing what booty they may from the foundered stores. Accordingly

they have fitted out a vessel, and set sail this morning just under my window. But being desirous in so perilous an undertaking to secure the countenance of the "good God" to enable them to rifle the wrecks without being wrecked in turn, they have hired a Priest to propitiate for them the favour of heaven by working the clapper of a single great bell all the morning without intermission! It makes the most nerve-rendering din imaginable! Clang, clang, clang, clang—it goes, at the rate of a double quick march, while the sailors are working, sweating, screaming, and flinging their limbs to all points of the compass. A thousand idle spectators, in all kinds of motley dresses, with many children in no dress at all, have gathered at the tocsin, and stand admiring the enterprising crew. They frisk, and laugh, and gabble with delight. They absolutely enjoy the horrible clash of sound! Clang, clang, clang, clang, goes the tympanum-rendering kettle-bell, provoking in vain the favour of any saint! Little boys swim about in the sea for joy—some of them with amulets round their necks, which their anxious mothers have tied there to make them buoyant. The birds are all

frightened away, and have taken refuge on the heights of St. Ermo, or the more umbrageous hill of Posilipo: and the fishes, I doubt not, are no less alarmed and are making for the deep waters. But to my extreme delight, after four hours of stunning preparation, there rides the vessel forth at last, and the thirty-thousandth clapper-clang hath sounded and ceased!

It was the respectable master of my hotel who informed me, that this bell-riot was made "for the purpose of propitiating the favour of the good God." I leave you to decide the point of casuistry, whether it is more Christian to worship an idol with adoration that is due only to the Supreme, or the Supreme with a devotion that is fit only for an idol!

✓ As you stand by the parapet of the Chiaja, looking down upon the clear calm sea, you will fancy perhaps, in half-a-minute, that you see something white in motion under the water. It will soon assume the form of a pair of human extremities of immature proportions, striking vigorously upwards. If you had not travelled long enough to have learnt unhappily the Horatian "*nil admirari*"—"stare at no-

thing"—maxim of experience, you would be tempted to call aloud for assistance to save a poor boy from drowning, whom some fanatically public-spirited disciple of Malthus, or some bad mother with too large a brood, had submersed in the deep, like a cat or dog, with a block of *lava* at his neck. But wait a little and observe! Never mind the kicking, though it looks so like the energy of despair! Do not be nervous because you cannot see the head and shoulders, or because the former is buried in the sand. In a few minutes, which will seem *ten* to your impatience, the little heels will approach the surface, a sudden strange untraceable revolution will take place, and there will stand the dripping urchin before you, blowing lustily, like a Triton, to get rid of the chest-full of breath that has done such long service. In seven seconds more another head will start up, like a cork, and then another; till you will find yourself in presence of six or eight diving sons of divers, who are practising their hereditary art. Their special delight is to dip for money. Throw a *carline* into the sea, and they will join heads together

at the bottom, like gudgeons that converge upon a worm.

The moveable stalls, a sort of sedan shop, at which women sell fruit in the streets, are often gorgeously coloured and gilt, and have religious devices upon them—a Madonna, a patron saint, but especially (I know not why, unless it be that they make fine colours) the red flames of Purgatory. In one of these decorations I saw two monks nearly up to their chins in the fire, while two little angels, flying above them, were emptying pitchers of water, as large as themselves, upon their tonsured skulls. Anywhere else it would have looked like satire. But the large, broad-smiling, lymphatic dame who tended the stall, could as easily have walked up Vesuvius into the crater, as have been capable of satirizing a monk.

The heat is already (in May) intense. A day or two of the Sirocco has driven the population into their houses for shelter. The poor boys that have no home creep into the shade, wherever it is to be found: and upon walking along the exposed Quai at noon, I observed that *each* of the stone posts had a boy curled up and asleep under its contracted shadow.

One curious sight, and a bad sign of the education of the people, are the well-known letter-writers, who sit about the streets, especially near the theatres and post-office, at a small deal table with pens and paper before them, and an empty chair at their side, waiting the commands of a client. In any country, except perhaps Scotland, this accommodation would be appreciated by the lowest class; but here you will see the client's chair occupied by well-dressed and respectable-looking persons, to whom letters are unknown. Perhaps the very convenience which their ignorance has rendered necessary, makes them contented to remain helpless. *There* is a sub-officer in regimentals, looking very much like an English sergeant, dictating the substance of a routine communication, which the expert scribe trims, like his pen, at a few strokes into shape and point. There sits a poor woman nursing her youngest child, and telling her story with a sad dejected countenance, as if she were writing to her runaway husband or her prodigal firstborn. A demure respectable-looking matron, who would have been a Quaker in England,—if they admit friends who

cannot write,—is communicating her thoughts with precision and care to the staid little dapper man, who treats his clients with much deference. And there, among the pillars of San Carlo, lingers a tall girl of nineteen, looking out for a *likely* interpreter. She would not for the world open her mind to any raw *young* man—but one: and therefore she chooses out the mild motionless old gentleman with large spectacles and snow-white occiput, who has had much experience, and composed many epistles for her friends,—a safe discreet man, who writes straightforward, and makes no observations; a confidant as trustworthy as the Father Confessor, and far less inquisitive. Two minutes later I saw her leaning over his shoulder with an expression of countenance at once laughing, arch, and coy. The old gentleman wrote on, while she whispered her “secret correspondence,” without sign of surprise, question, curiosity, or interest; without moving a muscle, that did not lead direct to his fingers’ ends. Only when she paused for a moment, he raised his eyebrows, to look up into her face, above his large spectacles, mutely demanding, if more



were coming: then he dropped his scalp down from its wrinkles, signed, folded, and was feed; and again sat motionless,—looking at nothing over his spectacles.

Last night sleep was once more driven from mine eyelids by the nocturnal Bacchanalia of another saint. The glare of torches passing under the window incessantly, with the singing, shouts, and noise of the procession, were evidence of the success which had attended the party we had met in the streets in the morning, bearing long candles and a large tray in their hands, and crying aloud for contributions towards the festival. I wish they would let the saints sleep in their graves and honest men in their beds without molesting both with their midnight revelry. It is sometimes dangerous to meet these processions by day, unless you are prepared to join in their adoration. At Castelamare, a short time ago, an Englishman, who declined to remove his hat upon one of these occasions, ran a near chance of being treated *à la Haynau* by the flushed mob. The only wise course is to keep out of their way, and to avoid insulting the public feeling which you cannot respect.

One Sunday afternoon I strolled out to a village on the hills, in the hope of enjoying the quietude of the day and the beauty of the scenery. The latter, at least, was scarcely to be had. One of the greatest inconveniencies to the pedestrian in Italy is the jealousy with which all private property is secured by immoderately high walls, which shut out the inhabitants from a view of their own glorious country. Elsewhere, with hills in the neighbourhood, you can reckon pretty surely upon getting at least a tolerably large diorama of the country; but in the vicinity of Italian towns you may climb the hills to no purpose. You may wander all day between walls, from twelve to sixteen feet high, with the assurance that a charming landscape lies all around you, but of which you will as fruitlessly attempt to get a glimpse, as young Cain, when he roved around the walls of Paradise. I have spent hours upon hours in a labyrinth of lanes, seeing nothing but a wall on this side and a wall on that, and meeting no one but a few riders upon asses in search of pic-nic adventures; whom, if any one had withstood by the way, their asses, from necessity, must have imitated

Balaam's in crushing their foot against the wall. Nothing is here to remind one of Italy but these dungeon-like walls and a section, at least, of the blue sky, which the lords of the soil could not wholly monopolize. None but an oppressed and patient people would have allowed themselves to be thus shut out of their own land. One of the recognized rights of the public way *ought* to be that of public view: nor should any selfish proprietor be allowed to wall up the people's property in such a manner as to destroy the enjoyment of it, any more than he has the right of walling up his neighbour's windows. But as it is,—in the neighbourhood of great towns, the very highways of Italy are the promenades of a prison.

At a small hamlet I met a party of religious men spending the Sunday in a way very similar to that of our Tract distributors, except that, instead of pamphlets which no one could have read, they were leaving at the cottage-doors prints of the Madonna. They were welcomed by the peasants with smiling looks and expressions of gratitude and joy. Many women, I observed, as they stood on

the door-sill to receive the boon, *crumpled* the Virgin with kisses in the fervour of their first love, and then when the picture had done duty in exciting a momentary exaltation, it was handed to the infant to play with,—probably as a sacred charm that would bring a blessing. Even here the quietude of the day of rest was startled by the explosions of a gunpowder devotion. The uproar—I can call it nothing less—of a holy festival rose from the valley below in loud shouts, in the crashing monotone of the solo bell, in the braying blast of a trumpet, and in reiterated fulminations. I turned aside into a small chapel by the way, perhaps five-and-twenty feet long by twenty broad, chokingly full of rustics, all of whom were screaming the service at the utmost pitch of their peculiarly harsh voices. It was worse than stunning, it was harrowing and rending: as they will understand who have experienced the saw-like effect produced upon the nerves by the discord of Neapolitan women.

Upon returning to the hotel where we dined, we were called up to the roof after dark to witness another holy fête in the immediate

vicinity—that of Saint Pasqual. The front of the church was brilliantly illuminated, and the monks were congregated in great force along the coping behind the lamps, and looked down upon the assembled multitude. The entertainment consisted in a grand display of fireworks, mingled with bell-ringing and military music. The grand *finale* was the explosion of a long train of fulminating caps, which were so arranged as to make the tour of the monks' garden. The hundred-and-one blasts were terrific and deafening: the reverberations rattled in the windows, seemed to shake the very houses, and at last growled out in thunder on the hills of Vomero and Posilipo. The design of all this sacred *tintamarre*, in the belief of the people, is to drive away the evil spirits of the air: though, if it have any effect at all, I should be disposed to think that it rather invites them. They have, in consequence, no pity on the sensitive nerves of the sick and dying. The clang of the terrible bell must be heard to purify the atmosphere from demons: and if it have not succeeded in this design, I cannot help suspecting, that it has frightened many a poor soul out of its tenement before the lease was fully up.

I am sensible to what Shakspeare calls "the music of sweet bells;" I can listen with solemn delight to the Miltonic *toll*,

"Swinging slow with sullen roar  
Over the heath and over the moor:"

and I can well feel with Cowper,

"There is in souls a sympathy with sounds:"

but this horrible hammering of bell-metal can be matched only by the fryingpan and poker; nor do I see the piety of serenading the saints with "rough music."

Then there is the blood of San Gennaro, that melts three times a-year to stain with its awful blot the moral character of the clergy. If I speak more severely of this lying wonder than of other pretended miracles, it is because it differs in kind from most of them. Whatever fraud there may have been in the first instance, a vast number of Romish miracles may be believed with the most honest credulity: but *this* cannot be explained by any love of the marvellous, by any superstitious exaltation of the fancy, that imposes upon itself with wonders, as wildly and as honestly as a dreamer: it calls three times a-year for the cooperation of wilful deceivers. It is no passive

acquiescence in an idle tradition; it is the deliberate contrivance of delusion. You must either believe in this perpetual miracle—more wonderful in its unmeaning perpetuity than all the miracles of all the Apostles—or you must believe that the Priests from generation to generation are habitual impostors. No other alternative is left: they force you into a corner thrice every year and compel you distinctly to answer the question, Is the miracle true, or are we shameless deceivers?

The latter alternative I take—reluctantly and *per force*: the former is wholly out of my power. And the same conclusion is come to by a vast number of Neapolitans, whom many strong reasons retain in the *exoteric* profession of Catholicism. A passing traveller has, of course, but meagre opportunities of forming a judgment upon such a subject from his own observation. My informants are those who have been resident here for many years; and their testimony is to the effect, that the whole educated population of Naples may, with few exceptions, be divided into two classes—infidels and bigots. The young men are for the most part infidels, to an extent little removed from

atheism: as they grow old, they fall under the influence of women, who themselves are under the influence of the Priests,—and atone for the impiety of their youth by abject superstition and the most narrow-minded intolerance. As in politics there is no moderate or middle party, but every man is either an *ancien-regime* Bourbonite, or a Red Republican at heart, showing the white feather outwards; so in religion there are frenzied bigots and profane infidels—but no party of rational Christians between them. The gross superstition of the people is acknowledged and deplored by some of the clergy themselves: though it is clear that all who have a hand in the Januarian imposture, are guilty of fostering what they profess to condemn.

Indeed the only extenuation of this offence against common sense and morality is to be found in the vehemence of the popular superstition. If San Gennaro does not bleed, the people will be in a frenzy: they will anticipate some dreadful public calamity, and very probably make a tumult in the streets;—which, both to the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, is the most awful event that can happen under



the sun. It is like the rumbling of the earthquake that forebodes a volcanic eruption. Therefore a few drops of the saint's blood must be applied as an homœopathic cure to the bloodthirsty spirit of the populace. This favourite miracle must again be produced to soothe their irritation, and to convince them that, with all their past crimes, they are still under the favour of their sanguineous patron. Were it not for this, it is believed that many of the Priests would be glad to get fairly quit of the liquefaction : for the day of inquiry and of retribution is coming ; and the number of those who believe it (in secret) to be a gross imposture is yearly increasing. With the French at Rome, and with the prospect of a railroad joining Naples to the Reasonable World, they would do well to dispose of the blood in time, before it falls into the hands of respectable chemists.

In sober seriousness, this miracle cannot be contemplated without pain and grief. When can the superstition of the people cease, if it be not earnestly resisted by their appointed teachers ? In some Roman Catholic lands—in France for example—the Bishops have from

time to time come forward to denounce and expose a vulgar superstition, of which they might have made a gain, and have borne the popular odium which, for a moment, results from such a course. Let the clergy of Naples learn from them a lesson of honesty and of moral courage, and make a vigorous effort before it be too late. Let them brace up their minds in the cause of truth to run a little personal risk; and, in the presence of the people, let them wash out once for all the clotted dregs of imposture, and throw the vial into the Lake of Avernus!

## LETTER XVII.

Naples, May 1851.

DEAR S—,

After giving you impressions so unfavourable of the Romish worship at Naples, I am happy to yield the Priests the benefit of the account of themselves and their flocks given (or at least edited) by one of their own community—the Abbé Galanti. You will judge how far it confirms or refutes what you might have anticipated.

“The clergy of Naples,” he writes, “are in general exemplary, and more tolerant than is supposed. They make less display than in some other places, of turbulent scenes, which are contrary to charity, and cover rather than expose the faults of the faithful.....If more care were taken in the education and choice of those who dedicate themselves to the altar, the Neapolitan clergy *would be* the first in the Catholic world. In general the Regulars

have less merit: and yet (though in a less degree than formerly) they are jealous and emulous of the Seculars. Till lately the churches of the monks and nuns were more frequented and better served—because rich. The parish churches were very small, often squalled, and almost empty; which deprived the Incumbents of all regard. But with the dissolution of several convents, many fine churches have become parochial: the oblations of the faithful have turned towards them, and the Divine service has begun to be performed with pomp. A juster and more natural tie has arisen between the faithful and their Pastor.

“In Naples religion degenerates into superstition, but not into fanaticism; and the splendour of the service is regarded as the most important part of it. In public calamities the people are pleased with penitential processions. They are to be met with in every street, at all hours of the day, and attended by all ranks. This custom indeed was fatal in the plague of 1656, and the authorities were obliged to prohibit it (as in the terrible eruption of Vesuvius in 1822) for the purpose of ensuring the public tranquillity. The Church desires such

penitential solemnities to appease the Divine wrath, not to give occasion to greater disorders. A few years ago an infinite number of prodigies were reported to have been wrought by an image of the Virgin near Caserta, and the people began to flock to it with rich offerings: but the wisdom of the government and the illuminated piety of the ecclesiastics having repressed the popular credulity, the miracles and the offerings ceased. This sufficiently shows, that there is no superstition but what is designed and instigated; and that travellers ought to be more measured in speaking of the tendencies of the people.

“To the Neapolitans all the services of the Church are nothing but brilliant festivals. Here the genius of the nation appears fertile in rites and pomps. The temples on holy-days are converted into magnificent saloons, decorated with hangings, lights, and music. The seats are turned towards the orchestra rather than towards the altar. The people are full of devotion towards the Madonna. Every shop has one of its own, with one or two lamps burning. Some traverse all the streets with night-torches; and in the summer months they

make for these images pretty constructions, decorated with rich carpeting, altars, musical instruments, and artificial fires:—all by the voluntary contributions of the neighbours and populace. Often you will see persons apostrophizing these images with the greatest effusion, and expressing to them their special needs: others prostrate themselves in prayer before a crucifix in the silence of the night, or on the threshold of a church.....On the 17th of January horses adorned with flowers are led to the church of St. Antony; where they are blessed, and garlands are tied to their necks; and after being made to turn round in the church three times, they are held to be safe from every evil.

“Other popular festivals are the procession of Antignano on Easter morning, the pilgrimages to Cardito, and Seafati on Ascension-day, and to Monte Vergine and the Madonna dell’ Arco at Pentecost. Beautiful is the sight of those who return from these distant pilgrimages with cars decked out with branches, with hats and staves ornamented with images of the Virgin, while the air is filled with songs, and sounds, and shouts of festivity.

Such cavalcades bear *the greatest resemblance to the ancient Bacchanals: whom they resemble indeed in the movements of the dance!* In order to lay by a little money for such excursions the people condemn themselves to privations for the whole year. *They* are thought happy who have been able frequently to repeat them in the course of their lives. When girls are betrothed it is inserted in the marriage articles that they are to be taken to these feasts.

“Christmas is kept by the *Presepî*—a species of devotion peculiar to Naples. It consists in constructing a natural landscape, in which to represent the birth of the Redeemer. Almost every house has one of greater or less size, and not a few deserve the best attention of the man of taste. All the circumstances and the costumes are represented with the greatest art, so as to form a most agreeable illusion. Some of them are put in action. There you see the lady on the terrace spread her linen to the sun,—the baker put his bread into the oven,—a procession of confrères with a bier and the usual accompaniment of poor, who attend a corpse to the grave,—soldiers who go through their exercises, &c. &c....”

“Among the lower class the necessity of labour renders the majority more moral than is believed. Many show a singular aptitude for every kind of industry. Intemperance is their prevailing vice, and the fruitful source of disorders and crimes. To escape from misery they have recourse to the ruinous gambling of lotteries, which not only increases their distress, but accustoms their minds to a faith in dreams, and cabalistic luck, and a thousand follies.

“The lowest class are the *fucchini*—the famous *lazzaroni*, about whom so much nonsense has been written. With them must be reckoned the ambulant vendors of fruit and eatables, not to say, the fishermen. These all have few wants, possess nothing, and do not care to acquire anything. They are scantily clad, and thence took the name of *lazzari*. Contented with necessities, they lead an easier life than you might suppose. The *fucchini* are at the command of the merchants, the Custom-house, the shops, and private individuals. They are often trusted with large sums, without ever giving occasion to complain of their deficiency. This moral virtue, rather than



their raggedness, should call for the observation of the considerate traveller.

“Personal beauty, in Naples, is rather with the men than with the women. With the advance of civilization the latter have acquired greater liberty. At first, only ladies of rank had this freedom: but at present not *even the artizans accompany their wives when they go abroad!* The fierce monster jealousy has been expelled by the softer manners of the age. But with the acquirement of greater liberty, our women have not equally improved in morals: they have rather gained the means of abuse than of self-government. Hence it arose that women of the higher classes, who were the first to obtain freedom, were the first to set bad examples. (The Editor adds in a note characteristic of Neapolitan idiosyncrasy—‘We do not think that this increase of female liberty is to be commended.’)

“The inhabitants of Naples, living in a healthy and charming climate, and drawing from a fruitful soil the productions most suited to human life, are naturally given to festive gaiety, and much disposed to indolence and effeminacy. Pleasure is their ruling passion:

they seek it earnestly and devote themselves to it in excess. At Christmas, at Easter, at Martinmas, and during the Carnival, all is pomp and profusion.

“The most obvious quality of the Neapolitan is his tendency to quarrel. He easily flies into a passion, and soon grows calm. He speaks loud, is full of curiosity, and must needs decide everything. Easy to be governed, he grumbles, but obeys. He is vivacious, garrulous, full of gesticulation. Dancing, singing, and music are the constant and universal taste. The people still use the tambourine, *nacchere*, and lute—all very ancient instruments, as appears from the pictures of Pompeii. The favourite dance is the *Tarantella*—a dance full of grace and expression. But the late changes have made a great alteration, if not in these tastes, at least in the liberty of expressing them. The mass of the people have lost in gaiety and gained in prudence.”

Thus far our author. Besides the great city of Naples, with its 360,000 inhabitants, Pozzuoli, Portici, Resina, Terra del Greco, Anunciata, Castelamare, Vico, and Sorento, lie round the bay and cover its fertile shores with habitations. The rocky isles of Capri and

Ischia, that guard on either side the entrance of the gulph, make its dimensions more perceptible and give a certain unity to the scene. The soil is so fruitful as to produce a succession of three crops in the year, and the high road that runs along the coast, passes through enclosures of orange-trees, lemons, figs, vines, and olives. The whole country, except where it is blasted by volcanos, is a *full* garden with the exuberant growth of a hothouse. Here the wealthy and luxurious Romans built their summer retreats. Here Virgil's tomb is shown beside the so-called Grotto, or Tunnel, bored by the Cumæans through the rock, on a scale that puts to shame the borings of many of our railroads. It is said to be 2654 palms long, 24 wide, and in height varying from 26 to 94. It formed the old high road from Neapolis to Puteoli and Cumæ.

In that direction there is much to interest the antiquary, the poet and the Christian. There the heights of Posilipo, as you quit the town, afford a ravishing view over the richly verdant vallies on one side and the wide bay on the other, bounded by the broken promontories from Castelamare to Sorrento. Vesuvius stands out by itself, as always, the monarch

of the scene. The road then dips to the sea-shore, just opposite the little isle of precipitous Nisida, crested with its conspicuous prison. It then passes through a land of wonderful fertility, interspersed with hot springs and mineral waters, and the extinct, or yet smouldering craters of volcanos. Everywhere — on the heights, or by the shore—are the remains of Roman villas, of heathen temples, of innumerable tombs. Here the sulphury vapour is steaming out of the ground hotter than the hand can bear; there the heavy tread of the foot is reverberated in caverns underground, which no man has explored. The ruins of the temple of Neptune look out upon the sea, where his aid was invoked in old time by the Neapolitan sailors, in rites not more superstitious than are thought available now. Perhaps it was this very temple that suggested to Horace (as he trod the path to his favourite Baïæ) that simile of the shipwrecked mariner, in which he celebrates his own escape from a more fickle sea :

“*Me tabulâ sacer  
Votivâ paries indicat uivida  
Suspendisse potenti  
Vestimenta maris Deo.*”

At Pozzuoli, or Puteoli, the man of letters will be interested by the reminiscences of the golden age of Rome, and of the days when Cicero wrote his *Quæstiones Academicæ* in the neighbouring villa, which he named after the *Academè* of Athens. Hence, as far as Baiaë, all is classical, enchanting,—or infernal. For in this vicinity are the grottos of the Cimmerii, who never saw the light, and the dreadful Avernus, which was the lake of Hell. The dark cave of the Cumæan Sibyl is a little more remote, and in the brimstone bed of Solfatara was placed the forum of Vulcan. These associations survived heathen times. It was long believed by Christian people that the ake of Avernus was truly the entrance to the Lake of Fire; and Capaccio (says Galanti) devotes a chapter to proving that Solfatara is in truth the Gate of Hell.

But Puteoli has holier associations; and as you stand on its busy shore, in old times one of the finest harbours of Italy, looking over the great deep southward, you can call to mind the day when a solitary vessel bore up from the horizon, freighted with the merchandize of Alexandria, bringing among its pas-

sengers a poor and persecuted Jew, who had received a commission to change all the religions of the Gentiles. He landed under Cicero's villa, and beneath the walls of the temple of Neptune. He, too, was thankful that he had escaped shipwreck,—but he put up no votive offering to the sea-god: he, too, was eloquent and athirst for wisdom,—but he set not a foot in the Academy. He passed by the Lake of Avernus and the sulphury mouth of Hell, and saw nothing in these dread fables but an expiring volcano and a myth that was written in water. And the work which *he* effected has survived, absorbed, overpowered, new-moulded, or swept away, the might, the religion, and the philosophy of Rome. He has placed his epistles beside the eloquence of Cicero—the invisible things of faith beside the poetic visions of Virgil and Horace—and has won nations to his cause. Not only has his influence been felt by the rude multitude, over whom the philosophers and poets had no power; but such minds as Justin's, Origen's, Tertulian's, and Augustine's, have torn themselves with an effort from the wisdom of Tully, that they might learn a better wisdom of St. Paul.

Through *him* the idol of Neptune has fallen into the sea, and the temples of Venus, Serapis, and Mercury will never be reared again. The religion he taught remains—still living, growing, expanding,—feeling after the future, and *forming* it; while every religion which it has once overpowered is dead for ever!

The little island of Nisida, that rises so abruptly out of the sea, as if a fragment of cliff had been floated off from the mainland, is crowned with a conspicuous convent-like building, that serves the purpose of a *clerical prison*. Minor offenders against discipline and morals are handed over to the Archbishop for punishment, but greater delinquents are sent “to the galleys,” as they call it, in this island. We were somewhat startled at being told that the number at present confined there was more than three hundred. But it was explained that two hundred and sixty of them were there for political offences, arising out of the late revolution; the rest had been convicted of various crimes, chiefly (so said our informant) such as are committed against the opposite sex.

On the other side of Naples, to the south, the bay is, if possible, yet more enchanting:

but, at this time of day, you need no elaborate description of the villages that sleep in the sun upon the sultry skirts of Vesuvius, or of the two fated towns which they overlapped and clung to, like the garment of Dejanira. From the Castle-at-sea, which gives its name over the water to the town that crowds down to it on the shore, round to the end of the great promontory that divides the Gulph of Naples from that of Salerno, the road keeps near the coast—now within reach of the spray—now ascending in a long gradient upon the hilly bank, in the face of Naples and all its villages, that glitter across the bay—now pointing straight ahead upon the rocky heights of Capri—now taking a sweep inland along the groove of a mountain gorge, to cross the lofty bridge that spans its narrower gullet—now emerging again from the oppressive sweetness of orange and citron grounds upon the fresher breezes of the sea—and terminating at last upon the promontory of Sorrento. From the summit of the hill that lies behind this place you will command, right and left, the two great bays of Naples and Salerno, embracing at one view the twin bosoms



of the deep that rest upon Italy between Pæstum and Pozzuoli.

In paying a visit to Herculaneum and Pompeii, we preferred a drive through the villages to ignoring a fair country by the railroad. Our charioteer was a Neapolitan without disguise—whipping, carolling, hallooing,—twisting, every three minutes, his shoulders and chest round to us on the pivot of his backbone, to tell us all he knew of every thing we passed,—and then twisting back again with a jerk, like a marionette, to save his galloping steed from running over a child; flying into a frenzy with everybody at the beginning of a sentence, but laughing good-humouredly at the end of it: in despair at every small difficulty, in ecstasy at every deliverance: and reverting, when nothing newer presented itself, to his three standard topics of eloquence—San Gennaro, Vesuvius, and Macaroni. He gave us an account in Neapolitan gibberish (which my companion, Baron P—, was kind enough to interpret) of all the eruptions, or, as he called them, *revolutions* of Vesuvius from the beginning of the world down to 1850; but especially of the famous one in

the fourteenth century, when a torrent of lava rolled down the very streets of Naples straight upon the church of San Gennaro: but the Saint of the Melting Blood was at his post to avert the mischief. He lifted up his right-hand—(our Neapolitan put himself in position and showed us the exact attitude),—rolled back the lava into the crater, and shut up the mouth of the volcano. Since that day to this the fiery deluge has never ventured upon the same course again.

In the midst of his raptures about Vesuvius, in whose land of lava we now were, and of whose devastating eruptions he spoke with the sort of respectful admiration which an Eastern shows for the tyrant that terrifies him, he did not, however, forget the maccaroni. It was made to perfection in these villages about the base. And he had been able to eat more of it since the revolution than before. Previously to that event the land was in the hands of middle-men, who had special privileges, which enabled them to oppress the people, and keep up the price of corn. But these privileges they lost in the revolution, and could no longer prevent the poor from buying corn at

a reasonable rate. This, at least, was his view of the case; of which, however, he gave a very confused explanation: but the important point was, that before the revolution he ate black bread, now he could get white: then he feasted on garbage, now he could buy macaroni.

Good wine and macaroni were the product of a soil that warmed itself on the cinders of volcanos. Accordingly, of his own motion he drew up at a macaroni manufactory at Annunciata, and invited us to witness the process of turning off these edible tubes. We were shown the flour in various stages of refinement, and then the dough in its proper state of consistency. The tubes are produced by enormous pressure. The dough was thrust into a strong metal box, bored at one end with open rings (or any other pattern that might be desired): into the other end was fitted a moveable piston, upon which a screw was brought to bear, turned by a wheel so large, that a man worked it like the treadmill, by walking up its side. The immense power thus obtained compressed the dough in the box, and ultimately forced it through the

rings in long tubes of macaroni. These were cut off at proper lengths, and hung up on lines in the sun to dry.

Above the streets of Herculaneum the lava lies more than eighty palms deep; and has run in at the windows, and under the strong doorways, and filled up the theatre, the temples, and the courts,—with all the streets and lanes between the houses,—and then cooled down into a compacted mass with the fossil of a town in its centre. They have chipped out the lava from the long galleries of the theatre, and cleared the stage, and opened up old entrances; and you may take your place now by the orchestra, and hear the rumbling of carriages overhead in the streets of superimposed Resina. But except for the purpose of seeing the depth of the molten deluge and the manner in which the now solid stone has forced itself into the interior of buildings without destroying them, taking an impression of every thing, down to a *comic mask*, that fell in its way, Herculaneum affords less matter of interest than might be anticipated. The earlier excavations have been filled up again, and the Museums, as usual, have plundered

the place of every thing that is locally interesting. The *Resinans* also protest loudly above-ground against being undermined in their beds, and consigned one day, on a sudden, to the ancient level of Herculaneum.

POMPEII lays stronger hold upon one's soul; chiefly because you can see it *in extenso*, with its streets and forum basking in the sun in awful silence. Though it was given over for a time to the pillage of antiquarian Protectionists, yet a great part of its characteristics remain. It is disappointing, indeed, to hear the guide exclaim, as he opens a closet which, you presume, contains something worth preserving, "There, gentlemen, is the *stucco* of the statue which has been removed to the Museum," or, "Here, from this spot was taken the finest ancient mosaic in the world." "Look at that monument, gentlemen, it is of the highest interest: it is an exact *copy* of the original which has been removed." But happily they could not carry away the forum and amphitheatre in donkey-carts. Otherwise, before now, one might have been the delight of the Champs Elysées at Paris, and the other set up on Goose Green in the parish of Camberwell.

But *there* the Forum lies in the heart of the vacant city, with all its temples and broken columns to itself! and, high above, Vesuvius looks sternly down upon its solitude, and seems to demand, "Is this the city that *I* smote and buried out of sight? Who then has raised her from the dead?" Nay, they are *mute* after long ages in presence of each other! There is no life any more—it is but the exhumation of dry bones. The City lies beneath her Destroyer like a skeleton in its opened sarcophagus, yet surrounded by the ornaments and utensils of common life.

The ascent to the crater of the far-famed Volcano was an inevitable expedition from Naples. It differed somewhat from what I had expected, especially after reading Mr. Dickens' account. But that gentleman ascended nearly in darkness, and when the mountain was covered with snow and ice. From Portici, on the sea-shore, the mountain rises by a moderate ascent to about half its height, and then strikes up, steep and conical, to its apex. The sister ridge of Monte Somma leans upon it at the base of the cone; and somewhat below the fork between the two lies the Hermitage—the

station of rest and refreshment. Up to this point the path, though very rough, is passable by mules and asses: but disdaining their assistance we trusted to a mountain staff, and to a guide who showed us the way over the lava. It lies in two states—rocky beneath, cineracious above. The former, compact and solid, furnishes paving-stones for the streets of Naples, and materials for the most substantial architecture: the latter bears the greatest resemblance to a heavy kind of *coke*, varying in size from small cinders to large masses. With this lava-coke the greater part of the mountain is covered from top to bottom. It lies in rusty black heaps from the lip of the crater down to the broad base below the Hermitage, where it spreads out into dark fields of enormous cinders. It never *binds* or becomes firm, but is just as loose to the foot as if it were thrown out last week. Directly up this mountain of ashes lies your way to the summit: for the sheet of sand, that descends the whole length of the cone on one side, affords no sufficiently firm footing. The ascent increases in difficulty to the top. For the larger ashes have rolled lower down, and hold more compactly together;

while the smaller ones above scarcely afford place for the sole of the foot, and treacherously slip from under it at the moment of desperate effort. You pause midway to draw breath, and to quiet a palpitating heart. The mountain of lava overhead, more precipitous than ever, frowns forbiddingly upon you; and beneath, there seems to be no support to rest upon. The black fields of desolation sink away so abruptly from your feet, that you cling, giddy and bewildered, to the rough cinders, and seem to be on the point of rolling hopelessly to the bottom. But by the time your pulse has recovered its normal state, the giddiness is gone; your courage is again in the ascendant, and slowly—slowly—slowly the ashes are trodden under foot, and you stand at last, panting and glad, on the rim of the stupendous crater.

The toil is amply rewarded; first, by the magnificent view of the Bay with its steep mountain isles, its verdant promontories, its amphitheatre of hills, and its inner circle of city and villages, that whiten the shore—and then, by one glance, into the valley of the volcano. Steep is the descent to that bottom-



less pit of destruction: but it may be made without difficulty, for some two hundred feet, by those who can endure the volumes of sulphureous vapour, which puff out uncertainly around them; and who are skilful enough to avoid those specially hot spots of earth which will gnarl the soles of your shoes. The crater itself (since 1850) is a deep vale of sulphur, wonderfully beautiful, with the most brilliant hues of orange and red. The centre cannot be seen either from above or by descending to the utmost limits of safety. It has the appearance of being open and sinking well-like into the depth.

The descent to the Hermitage is most easy. It is made on a part of the mountain free from lava, and covered with a fine loose sand or ash-dust, in which at every step you sink half-way up to your knees. You may *trot* down from top to bottom. To slip beyond recovery, to fall headlong, or in any way to hurt yourself, is nearly impossible.

It is injudicious to determine universally what enterprising ladies can, or cannot, do: because one extraordinary woman will distance all ordinary men. But as a general

rule, ladies cannot ascend Vesuvius without the assistance of guides, who either steady and *draw* them with a girdle round the waist, or carry them, with great labour, in palanquins. A lady and a lady's maid belonging to our party were too ambitious, and, unaided, made the attempt on different days. But both grew giddy and fainted away upon the lava, and lay there for some hours before they could be got down again. The sedan, or palanquin, system requires six or eight men according to the weight of the party. We could not but be amused by a French gentleman, who was carried up in this manner by a little army of porters, to whom he cried out exultingly every now and then, "Courage, mes Enfants!" while his eyes sparkled with triumph at the feat which *he* was performing.

This expedition, even if you walk the whole way from Portici, as we did, though very troublesome and difficult, is too short a day's work to be extraordinarily fatiguing. It is not to compare with the pedestrian exertion that must sometimes be made in Switzerland; although there is, perhaps, no one Alpine ascent usually made by tourists, that is so difficult to

master as the cone of Vesuvius. The average time of ascent is an hour and a half to the Hermitage, and another hour and a half to the summit. But any fast young gentleman, or heroic pedestrian, will perform each portion in an hour: and some few, starting from the latter station, have scrambled, hands and feet, over the coke in thirty-three minutes. Is it not written in the Book of the Hermitage?

## LETTER XVIII.

Pisa, Genoa, Turin.

DEAR S—,

THE sea passage from the Gulph of Naples to its rival of Genoa is made in three days, or more properly nights. For the steamers touch in the morning at Civita Vecchia and at Leghorn, and do not start again till towards evening. If it should happen to be a saint's day at either of these places, not a stroke of work will be done; the business necessary for enabling the vessel to put out to sea again will be deferred for twenty-four hours. You must look therefore at the calendar before starting, otherwise you may spend a week in reaching Marseilles. At Civita Vecchia nothing is to be seen but the not unusual sight of an Italian town in the possession of foreign bayonets. At Leghorn, after four hours of lazy preliminaries, we received a written per-

mission to land; on the strength of which we made an excursion by rail to Pisa to admire once more the elegance of its many-columned Campanile, bowing with all its bells,—the elaborate doors of the Cathedral,—the Baptistery with its splendid font, provided with a circle of well-like cavities, adapted to entire but erect immersion,—and above all, the mediæval Frescoes of the Campo Santo, yet tolerably preserved beneath its quadrangle of Porticos. They enclose the sacred soil that once lay in the streets of Jerusalem, and was, possibly, trodden by holier feet than shall ever tread it again. In the Frescoes something more than art is visible. Here the heavy carcase of a monk is contended for in mid air by an angel and a demon, this pulling at the feet, that claiming the tonsured skull: and there the daring artist has taught a startling lesson by tumbling a nun from heaven, weighed down by the huge cross to which she clings! In another fresco,—the Triumph of Death,—the Icarian painter has attempted the impossible, and marred his work by contradictory conceptions. He has represented the disembodiment of the immaterial spirit by a very material embodiment of flesh:

plump babies are making their way out of the mouths of the dying,—half-a-foot yet entrapped between the teeth,—to signify the departure of the lingering soul.

The Genoese amphitheatre of Palaces, fenced in by a bank of hills, and looking down upon a forest of masts in its sheltered waters,—so beautiful in itself,—loses much of its glory and looks tame in immediate comparison with the more splendid Bay of Naples. It is doing it injustice to visit it with the grand picture from Pozzuoli to Sorrento yet fresh upon the mind. But it is second only to that far-famed gulph, and as you ride up into the crescent of the city on the bosom of the tideless sea, you feel that once only have you entered so fair a haven.

But touch the shore, and the balance is turned against Naples. The coast may be less beautiful, but it is inhabited by a braver and better race. The “*Dolce far niente*” has given place to hard-working industry. The people are decently clad. The countenance of the vulgar is no more brigandine, lazzeronian, and beggarly: the poor are not *all* mendicants; the idlers less numerous, and not *all* pick-

pockets ; the facchinos not always discontented with *all* remuneration ; and “the human face divine” at least vindicates its claim to the former epithet. The picturesque groupings of dirt and rags and nakedness, which enchanted the *genre* painter at Naples, have grown scarce. The shaggy lion’s-mane beard, with the hare’s heart beneath it, has become rare. But instead of them are the comely forms of the female population, moving easily along in the national costume, which was woven for them expressly by Modesty and Grace. It consists in a long muslin veil or scarf, supported on the crown of the head, and falling over the shoulders and within the arms, that lightly embrace and retain it. It gives an air of feminine dignity and elegance to the lowliest maiden that wears it.

The vast amount of shipping that lies in the harbour—the constant plying of boats to and from the steamers that come in from all parts—the lively streets, where the passengers step on as if they had something to do—the incessant strokes of the anvil, and the grating of wheels, that bespeak the industry of the people—the absence of the Tarantella dancers, and of un-

sightly cripples, and of little children at the doors, who seem always in a state just ready to put to bed,—form at first a comparison, and then a striking contrast, with the scenes of Naples. *She* also is lively, but only to the sound of the tambourine: and then she takes her long siesta, basking on the shore, while the commerce of the world goes by her.

Here too the religion of Rome has thrown off the excesses of southern superstition and appears at least in its normal state, not to say in that milder and more rational form in which it prevails in the Gallican Church. Coming fresh from England I should doubtless find much to object against in the imagery and ceremonial of Genoa: coming up from the flame-and-noise worship of the south, and from the Priesthood of the Melting-Blood, I breathe more freely, and seem nearer home. Political and spiritual thralldom forge chains for each other, which break and fall off together, when some unexpected earthquake shakes the prison-doors. The part of Italy most advanced in political development is least involved in abject superstition.

In the evening the streets and the public



walks presented a lively and striking appearance. It was Ascension-day : all the population were abroad, the women wearing their national costume. It looked as if a thousand nunneries had turned out their white-veiled daughters in troops to enjoy the freedom of a holy eve. They could not have been more prettily behaved, if it had been veritably a promenade of nuns. In the morning processions had been numerous in the streets, headed by a silver Cross borne aloft as a standard, and followed by many reverently behaved young people chanting the Psalms. I saw such a procession stop on one of the bridges, where three Priests went through the service as decorously and impressively as an English clergyman conducting the funeral service in the open air. The people stood round with their hats off, and quietly continued their way to the promenade when it was over. I could not but contrast their serious demeanour with the clamour and gaiety of Neapolitan demonstrations.

Another striking and agreeable change in passing northwards is the visible revival of the art of printing, or, at least, the revival of its application to any of the great objects of human

interest. The Newspapers at Naples are a ludicrous delusion. News there is none: the editors might almost be indicted for obtaining money under false pretences. They dare not utter a word upon any national subject that is of any real interest to anybody. Official documents, or mystifications, that are handed to them for insertion, a list of promotions, a few namby-pamby nothings turned off in a leading article, followed by an elaborate account of a wedding, a christening, a funeral, or a religious ceremony, is as much as they dare venture upon in the Home-department. In treating of foreign lands they are a little less timid, and that just in proportion to their remoteness from Italy. They borrow a few articles from Galignani after they have been before the world for some three weeks, and their contents are known to everybody. But they will much sooner inform you of what is taking place in China than of any political occurrence at Florence or Rome. You must depend upon private sources of information if you ever expect to learn that the French soldiers have expelled the Roman troops from their own city.

It is necessary to live for a while in a coun-

try where it is a crime to speak the truth and treason to print it, in order to be aware of the pernicious effects of this worst species of tyranny. The moral cowardice which it engenders—the unmanly habit of concealment and prevarication—the baseness and treachery of espionage—the abandonment by noble minds of all noble pursuits, because that which is slavish alone is safe—the hopeless stunting of the intellect by allowing it no range beyond trifles—the want of faith in the honesty of authors who write under constraint—the impossibility of ever educating and elevating public opinion;—these are some of the evils that follow from a fettered press. And though it would doubtless be dangerous, after so long a silence, and among a people rendered by that silence alone so politically ignorant, to give to the Press the extreme liberty which it enjoys in more favoured lands; yet a beginning might at least be made by allowing it to tell the plain truth. Let it not be a crime to record facts. If a small part of the pains had been taken to enlighten the people, which have been spent in purposely deceiving them, southern Italy would not now be situated, like dead Pompeii, on the ashes of a smouldering volcano.

In the shop-windows of Genoa the very titles of the books are refreshing,—though, in many cases, I abominate their contents. Here are Proudhon's schemes, and Cabet's, and Louis Blanc's, and other Utopian *potage*—the scum and bubbles of overboiling liberty that have wellnigh put out their own fire. They could no more appear at Naples or Rome, than a cheap version of the Bible, with which they are classed in perniciousness. A Roman bookseller informed a friend of mine this spring, that, while most prohibited works could be procured without much difficulty, the books that would really bring him into trouble, if they were found in his shop, were the Socialist publications and the Bible! But these hot-blooded works of the Republicans have done more good by enlisting all soberminded men against them than could have been effected by 100,000 bayonets. They have had free entry into the market here,—and have drugged it, and are at a discount: into which condition no repressive force could have brought them. They have had rope enough,—and some of them have already made their confession. The censorship, on the contrary, would have made

them permanently famous. I can well understand how mischievous books are eagerly sought after, and invested with a fictitious importance, merely because they have been made contraband. If you ask an Italian bookseller what modern works of repute he has to show you, he will put a volume into your hand with the remark, "Here, sir, is a work of great merit, a work that has been prohibited"—just as we might say—"a work that has been handsomely reviewed in the Quarterly."

I never thought that I should have greeted with pleasure the title-pages of Socialists and Red-republicans. But now they look like the symbols of liberty, and signs that I have escaped from the land of political death. Even Ledru-Rollin's *Decadence de l'Angleterre* was viewed with benevolence,—the more so, as it is a rarity anywhere but in the shop-windows. I rejoice to be no longer in a country

"Where single thought is civil crime,  
And individual freedom mute."

Expediency, it need not be said, is in the long run on the side of honesty and truth. By repressing opinion—which is subjective truth—a government may gain a momentary benefit

with a permanent damage and a blot. By allowing it free course, it secures the incalculable advantage of knowing for certain the state of the public mind, of profiting by the conflict of parties, of seeing vulgar errors sifted and discussed, and ignorance lose credit from being allowed fully to expose itself. No *corps* of spies and policemen will give a government half the useful information that is conveyed by an unshackled press. It is its best ally if it wishes to act honestly by the people; for free discussion will always end by giving to honest rulers the rewards of honesty. But when they are committed to an iniquitous and merely selfish policy, their greatest enemy is an enlightened public opinion. To prevent its development by stifling the Press is the great object of their endeavour. For the education of the public mind by the free discussion of the right and wrong of every question will as infallibly bring all arbitrary misrule to an end, as the spread of Christianity (without appealing to the sword) overthrew or modified all the heathen governments of the world.

I will not detain you with the beauty of the road that runs round the brow of the

Mediterranean from Genoa to Nice. The great range of the Apennines (that lies the full length of Italy, like the fossil of a huge Saurian, with its ribs descending almost to either shore, with its long jaw resting obliquely upon Genoa, and its tail splashing round through the sea upon Sicily) softens down in this neighbourhood into slopes and verdant valleys, richly clothed with abundance. The line of highway traced over, and sometimes cut through the final undulations that terminate in abrupt cliffs above the sea, gives a wide view over this inland ocean, and looks out upon the clustering palaces of Genoa for many a far mile. It is scarcely less beautiful when it strikes into the interior, among bright-green hills and valleys, to Arquata. There, at the feet of the expiring Apennines, the Turin railroad receives the traveller, and conveys him, in an hour, within sight of the sterner and more majestic Alps. How solemn and grand did they appear as we caught the first sight of them from the luxuriant plains of Italy! How sublime a bulwark to the might and severity of the north! The clouds of evening were already gathering about their rugged

forms, ominously foreboding a stormy future; and the blood-red sun of Italy went down angrily behind them!

TURIN is a noble capital—less interesting perhaps to the tourist than other cities of Italy—not ancient—not historically renowned—not quaint in its appearance—nor gorgeous—nor sublime; but possessing broad, straight, well-paved streets, with substantial and convenient buildings; its principal thoroughfares lined on both sides with shady and lofty arcades and promenaded by a busy throng of active and intelligent people. The greater elevation of the arcades takes from them the air of dulness which commonly marks this style of architecture. Personal beauty is not conspicuously the dower of the daughters of the land; and the not infrequent goître betokens the vicinity of the Alps. These rugged heights hanging out, on a hundred slopes, their glaciers to the sun, terminate northwards the vista of the principal streets, and seem—such is the deceptive appearance of unaccustomed magnitudes—to be close at hand. On the opposite side of the town the avenue of arcades looks out upon a range of verdant and picturesque hills



rising immediately from the banks of the Po. The highest of them is crowned with the conspicuous dome and towers of the *Superga*—a votive church erected in 1706 by Amadeus to the Virgin, after his great victory over the French. Few cities are better laid out for the ordinary purposes of social life than Turin; and if it could be wheeled somewhat farther from the French frontier, it would make a fit capital for *future* Italy. Its citizens belong without doubt to the foremost race of independent Italians.

Here, as elsewhere in Italy, the love of obscurity which characterized the houses of the old Romans, still prevails. Light and heat are so connected together in their ideas in this sunny clime, that in order to exclude the one they adumbrate the other. The doors of the shops and cafés are hung from top to bottom with sombre curtains, that draw aside for ingress and egress; and the solitary small window is carefully closed with Venetian blinds. Entering from the bright streets you see nothing before you but coloured spots on a background of darkness; and at a Restaurateur's you may get through the first course before you can well recognize your plate.

This obscurity, as might be supposed, is much cultivated in the churches, where it has a mysterious and solemnizing effect. After sunset, when the streets are dim beneath a dozen stars, glide in through the curtain that excludes even the twilight from yonder yet open church! Spend a few minutes in devout meditation, and adore Him who is Light in Darkness!—How solemn and awful is the impression! How near does Spirit seem to Spirit when darkness has gathered all visible things to itself! With what longing do we feel after that unseen world, when our senses find nothing to rest upon in this! In the solitude of the Temple when none but the Invisible is there—when night has shrouded the pictures, and the columns, and the altar,—when the silence is so profound that it seems to be positive and audible—how fearfully does the soul whisper to itself with the benighted Patriarch, “How dreadful is this place; this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!”

But look again, when the eye has grown familiar with the night! It is not utter darkness! The turn of the arches is just traccable

beneath the roof, where they catch the last ray of twilight. At the east end some hand has lighted a feeble taper, that just glimmers to the knee of the Madonna. Nay—listen!—it is not utter silence! There is a sound as of companions in the darkness!—a light rustling of the garments—a breath—a sigh—the fluttering of lips that whisper at a dread Confessional, where ONE only can hear! Slowly, slowly, the forms of human worshippers become perceptible in outline: rows upon rows of silent adorers grow upon the vision: and instead of being alone with God, you find yourself one among many:—among many who have stolen at eventide “within the veil,” to worship their common Father, unknowing, and unknown to, each other!

There is something touching and cheering in this consciousness. If Italy be, as we think, in a state of spiritual darkness, yet many, I doubt not, are in all sincerity worshipping the true God through the night, who will be recognised by all Christians in the morning.

## TO ITALY.

MY spirit lingers yet among thy tombs,  
Hope-widowed Italy! For to mine eyes  
Thy cities are as crowded cemet'ries  
Of great men's graves; wherein the myrtle blooms  
And Fame with lamps of fire their vault illumines.  
Thou art the dead, not they! Beneath the skies  
Thou liest death-still as Pompeii lies,  
While high above the dark Volcano glooms.  
Oh! that some Scipio from his sarcophagus  
Rising in strength unto his country's needs  
Might yet ennoble an ignoble throng,  
And breathing on faint hearts his ancient rage,  
Make them once more, in unambiguous deeds,  
The stern and stalworth children of the strong!

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